

LANDSCAPES AND ARTEFACTS:

STUDIES IN EAST ANGLIAN ARCHAEOLOGY
PRESENTED TO ANDREW ROGERSON

Edited by

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Badeslade's pocket-sized map of Norfolk from *Chorographia Britanniae* published in 1742

Back cover image: Photograph of Andrew Rogerson at Wicken Bonhunt 1972 (Bob Carr)

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Satyrs, leopards, riders and ravens

Anthropomorphic and Zoomorphic objects from Roman Norfolk: A safari through the county's religious landscape

Adrian Marsden

Abstract: Andrew Rogerson's most recent incarnation has been as head of Norfolk Historic Environment Service's Identification and Recording Service. It has been this writer's pleasure to work alongside Andrew and the co-editor of this volume, Steven Ashley, for a number of years. Our team records several thousand items of metalwork every year; of these, a significant number are of Roman date and, among these, a very few are in some way anthropomorphic or zoomorphic. Most of these are representations of animals but a small number depict deities. Over the years the corpus of these items has become large enough to consider what they might tell us about religious belief in Roman Norfolk.

There are a number of difficulties in a survey of this sort. Considering Norfolk in relative isolation is awkward since the Icenian domains covered a considerably larger area. For example, Rogers in an unpublished MA thesis drew attention to the large amount of Roman religious material from the Fens and, in particular, from the Fen-edge.¹ Much of this corpus was found outside Norfolk but the group is best considered as a whole. Likewise, many objects that relate to beliefs in Roman East Anglia and connect to similar finds in Norfolk have been unearthed south of the county in Suffolk. Troublesome in terms of Norfolk itself is the uneven nature of metal detector survey in the county, some areas being well-searched and others, for various reasons, not being searched at all.

Another problem lies in the difficulty of searching for old finds in the records. Descriptions of many further items probably lurk in the paper files of Norfolk's Historic Environment Record (henceforth HER) but tracking them down would require going through many hundreds of thousands of finds records. There is also the question of different standards of recording. The vast majority of items mentioned here are recorded on the HER and this number, referring to a specific location, is given in brackets in the text. However, some objects discovered before the late 1990s are very basically described and the only images easily accessible are polaroids, often of rather indifferent quality. Many of them are mentioned very briefly in the roundup of recent finds listed in the county journal *Norfolk Archaeology* and, for the sake of completeness, these references are given. Others are recorded to a far higher standard and some are also available online on the Portable Antiquities Scheme (henceforth PAS) database. Where this is the case the PAS reference, usually headed by the prefix NMS, is given after the HER number. A number of items have been acquired by Norwich Castle Museum; in these cases the accession number, beginning NWHCM, is also given.

All in all, however, there is enough material to make an investigation of what has been recovered well worthwhile although it is beyond the scope of this offering to consider finds from further afield than Norfolk in any depth. Nor

it is possible to include other items which most probably belong to the realm of religion such as seal boxes. Bagnall Smith makes a compelling argument for these having been part of the process of making a vow to a deity, the act of *nuncupatio*, but there is not space to include them here.² They are explored fully in a recent study by Andrews.³ Small votive tools and weapons comprise another category which is not considered here. Those from Norfolk have been published briefly elsewhere⁴ and the group as a whole has been discussed by Kiernan.⁵

Various pieces of research in recent years have increased considerably our knowledge of religious belief in the Eastern counties of Britain. We now know, based on the concentration of the so-called TOT rings in the area of the Corieltavi, modern-day Lincolnshire, that the god Toutatis was particularly revered in that tribe's territory.⁶ The assimilation of the god Faunus with the tribal god of the Icenii has also been explored.⁷ Metal detecting near Baldock in Hertfordshire has uncovered votive plaques and a statuette naming Senua, a hitherto unknown deity.⁸ She was almost certainly the goddess of a sacred spring that issued up at the site.

The case of Senua is particularly instructive when one considers the lack of surviving monumental inscriptions from Norfolk. This is hardly surprising given the lack of native stone suitable for engraving in the county. Presumably wood and other perishable materials were used that do not survive to embellish the archaeological record. Thus, the epigraphic evidence that survives at other sites in Roman Britain is non-existent in Norfolk. We have none of the names of the more well-known gods and goddesses recorded on stone and we also lack the names of any minor deities that may have been worshipped. Gods and goddesses whose area of influence was local, confined to a spring, stream or grove fall into this category.

¹ Rogers 2004 (unpublished)

² Bagnall Smith 1999, pp. 48-51

³ Andrews 2012

⁴ Marsden 2012a, pp. 62-3

⁵ Kiernan 2009

⁶ Daubney 2010

⁷ Nash Briggs 2012 and Marsden 2012a, pp. 54-5

⁸ Jackson 2002

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Other local deities may have had their origins in the deeds of local heroes or the semi-mythical founders of settlements that later came to be tribal centres. We have the writer Pausanias as a source for similar figures in the eastern provinces of the empire but, for the provinces of Britain, non-literate before the Roman conquest, and other parts of the west, we have no such sources. It has been postulated that the stories of the martyrdom of St. Alban at Verulamium have their origin in an older, pre-Roman head cult at the place.⁹ One would speculate that important centres in Norfolk had their own tales about how they came into being and what semi-mythical events occurred there.

Sadly, the opportunity to travel through East Anglia in the Roman period and listen to the tales centring on these long-lost heroes and local deities is no longer a possibility. Some of the characters mentioned might be known to us but some would probably be individuals of whom we know nothing.

The lack of any epigraphic evidence that might offer the odd insight renders us truly blind on the subject of Icenian myths and the gods and goddesses who featured therein. Mosaics, on occasion another source of evidence for religious belief, are also rather lacking in Norfolk. Indeed, only one sizeable fragment of a mosaic is known from Norfolk, from the Roman villa at Gayton Thorpe and this carries only geometric patterns.¹⁰ There is nothing significant in the category of wall paintings.¹¹ In any case, these media do not generally deal with local gods, especially mosaics and wall paintings which tend to reference more well-known and widespread Roman subject matter.

Thus, we are left with a range of items, most of which fall into the category of metalwork. These include only six inscriptions with a religious content and all have been published at some length elsewhere. Five are *defixiones* (curse tablets) in lead, a small fragment from Hockwold (HER 5587) that can offer nothing of use, another from the same site with a few words petitioning a deity's help in retrieving a stolen towel or napkin,¹² and another where Caelianus petitions a deity for help regarding a theft.¹³ An example from Weeting with Broomhill is in a similar vein¹⁴ whilst a complete example from Caistor St Edmund (HER 9819, NWHCM 2005.600) asks Neptune for his aid in catching a thief.¹⁵ The other, a *lamella* (a prayer inscribed on a sheet of gold), was found in Billingford (NWHCM 2005.297).¹⁶ It is an interesting item where the appellant, one Tiberius Claudius Similis, asks the god Abrasax for 'Health and Victory'. It was brought into the

finder's garden in topsoil, however, and the lack of any firm provenance renders it of limited importance.

All of these objects, moreover, are very standardised, following set formula after a very Roman tradition. In order to look at what was being done differently in Norfolk, if anything was being done differently, it is necessary to consider other material, the items, mainly metalwork, with which this paper is concerned.

Major hoards and site assemblages of religious material

To sketch the background, it is probably most logical to begin with a survey of the major finds of metalwork, both hoards and significant site assemblages, that have been recorded over the years. Some of these have already been published and some are very old finds indeed but it is still useful to mention them in summary here before considering the other material.

The oldest notable find, a hoard of religious objects from Felmingham, offers a good starting point (HER 7533, Fig. 1, no. 1). This group was discovered in 1844 and is now in the British Museum.¹⁷ The hoard was concealed in a pottery vessel imitating in form a bronze cauldron, complete with looped handles. A coin of Valerian II or Saloninus, struck in the mid-250s, suggests a date of burial in the later part of the third century. One is tempted to speculate that the burial of the hoard was connected with raiding on the north Norfolk coast in the years immediately before the British emperor Carausius came to power (AD286-93), the contents of a group of shrines being hastily gathered together and concealed for safety.

The hoard is a rich one and includes bronze heads of Jupiter and Minerva, a mount depicting a male bust with a crescent on his forehead and solar rays erupting from his brows, best interpreted as the head of a god of the heavens (Fig. 1, no. 2), the figurine of a Lar, two statuettes of corvids originally mounted on iron wands, a votive wheel¹⁸, a sceptre handle, a priest's rattle¹⁹ and various other ceremonial items of metalwork. As an introduction to religious assemblages it is particularly instructive since it demonstrates the wide-ranging nature of some Roman religious deposits, containing objects in the image of a number of deities. Clearly, many so-called Roman temple sites comprised a number of shrines, each devoted to the worship of a particular god or goddess.

Felmingham is a very old find. More recently, metal detecting has been responsible for the recovery of enormous amounts of material and some of the resulting assemblages are of great importance. A very productive site, undoubtedly representing a religious centre, is that at Great Walsingham (HER 2024). The objects are numerous (Fig. 2, no. 3) and depict a range of deities. These have been

⁹ Niblett 2001, 111

¹⁰ Neal and Cosh 2002, pp. 215-6, mosaic 71.2, fig. 185

¹¹ Ling 2007

¹² Hassall in Gurney 1986, p. 87

¹³ Tomlin 2008, pp. 380-1

¹⁴ Hassell and Tomlin 1994, pp. 296-7

¹⁵ Hassell and Tomlin 1982, pp. 408-9

¹⁶ Tomlin 2004, Marsden 2012a, pp. 52-3

¹⁷ Gilbert 1980. British Museum Accession no. 1925, 0160

¹⁸ See Kiernan 2009, 33-9, which places these wheels in the context of the worship of Jupiter assimilated with a Celtic 'Wheel God'

¹⁹ Boon 1983

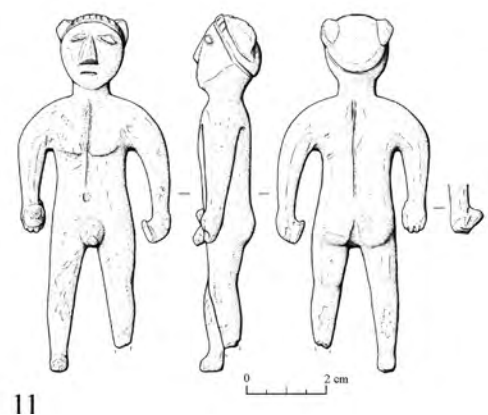


FIG. 1, 1 FELMINGHAM HOARD, 2 HEAD OF A DEITY (TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM), 5 GOAT, GREAT WALSINGHAM. 6 COCKERELS, GREAT WALSINGHAM (NORFOLK MUSEUMS SERVICE), 9 ITEMS FROM THE THETFORD TREASURE (TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM), 10 MERCURY, WICKLEWOOD (NMS), 11 MERCURY, GIMINGHAM (NORFOLK HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SERVICE)

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comprehensively published and include three Mercury statuettes (NWHCM 1985.379.1, Fig. 2, no. 4) and a Minerva figurine from the nearby site at Wighton (HER 1113).²⁰ There are many other objects, three-dimensional appliqué busts of Minerva and Jupiter, a number of masks of satyrs and possible cupids, two figurines of goats (Fig. 1, no. 5) and three of cockerels (Fig. 1, no. 6), and many rings with a range of gods and goddesses decorating the bezels, either as intaglio gem settings or in relief. The wide range of the objects which reference different gods and goddesses point to a number of shrines being present at this large so-called Roman temple site. The coins recorded number upwards of 10,000 and many more have probably been illegally recovered by so-called 'night hawks'.

One of the items from this assemblage deserves additional mention because it should probably be discounted as being of Roman date. Described in Jean Bagnall Smith's catalogue as the bust of a three-horned deity, it is true that the piece's lentoid eyes and the apparent torc it wears give it the initial appearance of a Romano-British object.²¹ However, in general form it resembles very closely a series of laver mounts in the shape of human heads which date to the fifteenth century. The flat back and circular hollow in the rear of the head, together with the shoulders being represented by two pointed projections, are standard features of these mounts and it is probably wisest to assign this odd object to the medieval period. The curious spherical knops on the end of the horns are rather unusual and would seem to indicate that a jester is intended.

Another large assemblage from Hockwold-cum-Wilton (HER 5587 and others) also clearly defines a temple site. Again, the objects are wide-ranging, including statuettes, vessel mounts, brooches, rings and many other items. It is to be hoped that these will be fully published at a future date. A hoard of late Roman pewter and glass vessels was also discovered at the site. Perhaps the most striking object is a fine figurine of Mercury (Fig. 2, no. 7).²² The flat back is an unusual feature but finds a parallel of sorts with another depiction of Mercury from Caistor St Edmund (NWHCM 1976.303.1, Fig. 2, no. 8), more accurately described as a mount than a figurine. As at Walsingham, the coin list is extensive.

The Thetford Treasure, discovered in 1979, represents one of the most important assemblages of cult objects from Roman Britain (Fig. 1, no. 9).²³ The contents comprise inscribed silver spoons, items of gold jewellery, including necklaces, bracelets, rings and pendants, and a magnificent golden belt buckle and buckle plate decorated with the figure of a prancing satyr. In particular, the spoons provide important epigraphic evidence for the worship in the area of the god Faunus, perhaps best described as a Roman version of the Greek god Pan. Some are inscribed with

personal names, those of the god's worshippers, and others with the various titles applied to Faunus.

It is surely correct to interpret these spoons in the context of a *collegium*, what should probably in modern terms be referred to as a coven, of worshippers. The personal names, Agrestius, Auspicius, Ingenuus, Persevera, Primigenia, Restitutus, Silviola and Vir Bonus, would appear to be the cult names used by the members of this group; certainly they do not seem to be normal, everyday names.²⁴ Many have rather overt connotations when taken in the context of the worship of Faunus and all may be said to reference aspects that fall within the areas of the god's specific concern.

The various titles applied to Faunus himself on a number of the spoons must also have been of significance. Sadly, the meaning of many of these is now, to say the least, somewhat obscure. The original translations of some style him 'Mighty', 'Mead-begotten', 'Bringer of Blossom', 'Protector' and, most aptly, 'Prick-eared'.²⁵ Some of the more recent, interpretations are equally interesting.²⁶

Other objects from the hoard demonstrate an acquaintance on the part of the Thetford *collegium* with the ancient myths relating to Faunus. For example, a gold ring with shoulders in the form of woodpeckers upholding a bezel set with a piece of glass recalls the fact that Picus, the Woodpecker, was the father of Faunus.²⁷ Another must surely show the goat-like head of Faunus himself.²⁸

The obvious fact that becomes apparent from the Thetford Treasure is that the *collegium* concerned was a group at the top of society. The men and women who worshipped Faunus near Thetford in the late Roman period were members of an elite who could afford items of gold and silver for use in their ceremonies. It is worth considering the possible context in which these precious objects were concealed.

The hoard was deposited in the very last years of Roman authority in Britain. Its burial was almost certainly connected with the two Edicts *De Templis* of Theodosius enacted in 391 and 392, the first of these prohibiting public worship of the old gods, the second their private worship.²⁹ In this milieu sacred objects such as the spoons, intimately connected with the worship of Faunus and inscribed with his name and epithets and the names of his worshippers, would have implicated their owners most dreadfully. The possibility does remain, however, that the Thetford Treasure was a votive deposit although this author believes its deposition is more convincingly placed within the context of Theodosius' anti-Pagan legislation.

²⁴ Hassall and Tomlin 1981, pp. 389-93 and Henig 1984, pp. 222-3

²⁵ Johns and Potter 1983, pp. 84-5

²⁶ Nash-Briggs forthcoming

²⁷ Johns and Potter 1983, p. 84, no. 7

²⁸ Johns and Potter 1983, p. 95, no. 23

²⁹ Salway 1993, p. 287. The rumour that coins of Magnus Maximus were found with the hoard would, if true, provide further evidence (if any were needed) of this late date; see Johns and Potter 1983, p. 15

²⁰ Hassall and Tomlin 1994, p. 306 and Bagnall Smith 1999

²¹ Bagnall Smith 1999, pp. 26-8

²² Gurney 2006, p. 117

²³ Johns and Potter 1983

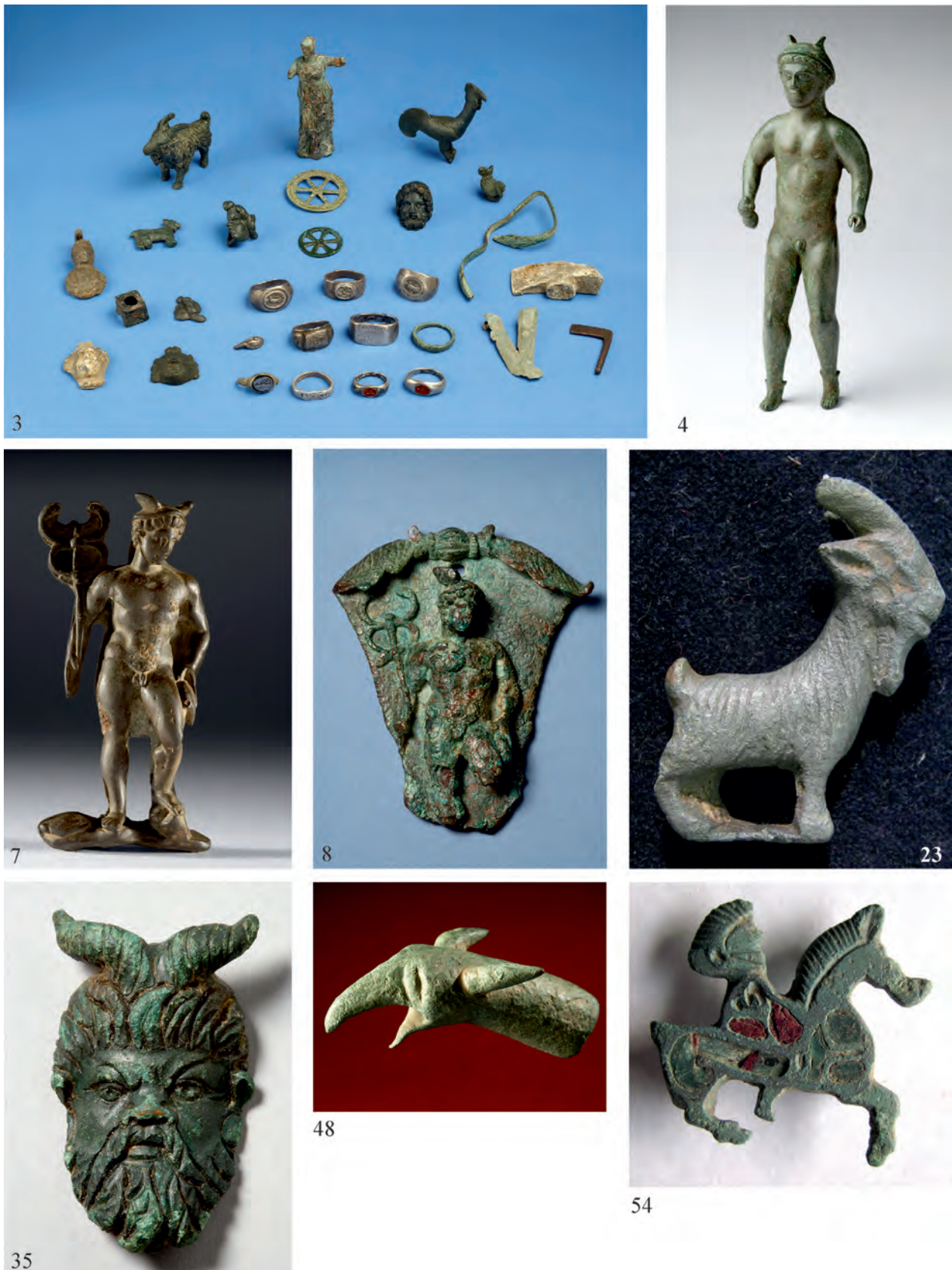


FIG. 2, 3 RELIGIOUS MATERIAL FROM GREAT WALSINGHAM, 4 MERCURY, GREAT WALSINGHAM, 7 FLAT-BACKED MERCURY, HOCKWOLD, 8 MERCURY MOUNT, CAISTOR ST EDMUND (ALL NMS), 23 GOAT, SOUTH WALSHAM (NHES), 35 FAUNUS HEAD, ELSING, 48 GRIFFIN HEAD STAFF TERMINAL, WICKMERE (BOTH NMS), 54 HORSE AND RIDER BROOCH, BEESTON-WITH-BITTERING (NHES)

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It is wise at this point to consider what sort of god was Faunus, to reflect on his main attributes and concerns and why he may have been worshipped in Roman Norfolk. His origins go back to the first days of Rome, to the era of her foundation, and thus he was connected with the festival of the Lupercalia, held in honour of the she-wolf who suckled Romulus and Remus. Befitting this, Faunus was first and foremost a rural god whose main concerns were the protection of fields and flocks. However, he also had the power of prophecy and might vouchsafe oracles to mankind.³⁰

The god came to be represented in a plural form by the *Fauni*; just as Faunus is identified with Pan so these creatures are to all extents and purposes satyrs. Hence there was a close connection between Faunus and Bacchus in whose train the satyrs were found.³¹ It would not be unreasonable to suggest that, at least in the minds of the men and women who used the Thetford Treasure to celebrate their mysteries, the cults of Faunus and Bacchus were heavily intertwined.

Bacchus was a popular god in Roman Britain³² and in the Thetford Treasure itself there are a number of objects that are demonstrably Bacchic in the images they carry, such as the large gold buckle decorated with a relief figure of a satyr prancing to the right and the spoon with an invocation to *Dei Fauni Nari* that carries upon the interior of its bowl the figure of a springing panther.

Worship of Bacchus constituted the main opposition to Christianity in fourth-century Roman Britain and it is in this context that we should probably try to understand the Thetford Treasure. Bacchus was also, like Faunus, a god who could vouchsafe oracular utterances. To be sure, the members of the Thetford *collegium* worshipped Faunus but they would also no doubt have been well versed in the myths pertaining to Bacchus. It would be unreasonable to deny some degree of cross-fertilisation between the two cults, a fact strongly implied by some of the objects discussed below.

Probably the worship of Faunus in Norfolk, or rather a native version of the god, goes back much further than the late fourth century and the Thetford spoons should be considered in the context of Roman assimilation of native gods in the period following the conquest. The assimilation of the native deities of Roman Britain with their Roman counterparts is well known. In many areas of Britain, most famously the case of Sulis-Minerva at Bath, a local god or goddess came to be equated with his or her Roman counterpart and worship continued. In Norfolk, part of the territory of the Iceni, the situation may have been governed by the Boudiccan revolt which almost drove the armies of Rome into the ocean. The tribal gods of the Iceni, contaminated by the rebellion of their worshippers, may have been thought beyond assimilation.

Perhaps, in the case of the Icenian dominions in the aftermath of the Boudican revolt, it was felt wise to compel worshippers not to speak the original name of the tribe's chief god at all and simply refer to him as Faunus. Perhaps, by the end of the fourth century, any other names had simply been lost in the mists of time in any case.

Alternatively, in the wealthy and sophisticated milieu of late Roman elite society, it may have seemed rather parochial to dwell on the god's British tribal origins and he was identified instead solely with the ancient deity who was so connected with Rome's beginnings.

It is time to move on from the large assemblages and consider the other anthropomorphic and zoomorphic material that forms the main part of this paper

Anthropomorphic statuettes

Statuettes depicting deities offer a good starting point in any survey of religious material. They are generally instantly recognisable, most gods and goddesses having attributes and adjuncts that make them clearly identifiable. A reasonable, if not large, number of these have been unearthed in Norfolk over the last few decades.

Not surprisingly, a number of statuettes of Mercury have surfaced to stand alongside those already mentioned. They underline the widespread popularity of the god in Norfolk as well as in Britain and the North-Western provinces of the Roman Empire as a whole. They occur across Norfolk as can be seen from the distribution map (Map 1). They are best seen as representing the background of Roman religious belief, a background in which Mercury, being associated with various Celtic gods, was very much revered.



MAP 1 DISTRIBUTION OF MERCURY STATUETTES

³⁰ Johns and Potter 1983, p. 50

³¹ Johns and Potter 1983, p. 51

³² Henig 1984, pp. 200-3 and 221-4

One of the better modelled examples was discovered whilst gardening at Roudham (HER 28205) and figures Mercury holding a purse in his right hand with a cape draped over his left arm.³³ Some of the casting seams are visible and the piece appears unfinished but there is no good reason to doubt that it is of Roman date. A rather elegant and slightly smaller figurine from South Lopham (HER 29680) features the god in an identical posture.³⁴

Another figurine from Wicklewood (HER 18111, NWHCM 1993.6.1, Fig. 1, no. 10) depicts a rather non-classical Mercury whilst records of others, of varying sizes and levels of competence, exist for Caistor-by-Yarmouth (NWHCM 1905.50), Diss (no further provenance), Fornsett (HER 56704), Hockwold (HER 5351), Sculthorpe (HER 31838)³⁵, Stanhoe (NWHCM 1966.286), Tuttington (HER 30474)³⁶, West Winch (HER 28120) and Wicklewood (NWHCM 1985.380.4).

Another Mercury figurine from Gimingham (HER 52909, Fig. 1, no. 11) is surely a native product. The figure is ill-proportioned with short legs and its head, with lentoid eyes and a coarsely-defined nose and mouth falls well outside the parameters of classical art. He holds what is apparently a purse in the palm of his hand whilst the other hand probably once held a caduceus. His identity is confirmed by the winged cap, the *petasos*, which he wears. He is otherwise naked.

A figurine from Great Dunham (HER 4188), in reasonable style, appears to wear a *petasos* but the damaged hands with a consequent lack of adjuncts do not permit a firm attribution to Mercury. From North Creak (HER 1913), a headless, naked statuette whose right hand appears to have gripped the shaft of an uncertain object, perhaps a caduceus, may have been another Mercury but this is also uncertain. The execution is competent but no more, the upper part of the legs appearing rather too long for the trunk.

Mars is represented by two figurines, both relatively recent discoveries. A rather corroded example from Ingoldisthorpe (HER 1553, Fig. 3, no. 12) features the god wearing a cloak and armour, the latter comprising a breastplate, a skirt of scales, greaves and high-crested helmet. His right arm is raised and would most likely have originally held a spear. The left arm hangs by his side, partly covered by the folds of the cloak. Another, from Beighton (HER 51861, NMS-1CFD67, NWHCM 2009.203, Fig. 3, no. 13), is of larger size and substantially complete although it is missing most of its feet and its left arm.³⁷ The god is armoured, with a tall helmet, breast- and backplate and a skirt of *pteruges* although he does not appear to wear greaves. Mars does not seem to have been very popular in Norfolk, being more worshipped in the Military Zone that occupied the

North of Britain although he was frequently venerated as an agricultural deity, as in the Cotswolds.³⁸

Worship of Jupiter, king of the gods, was apparently not especially widespread in Roman Britain but three figurines have come to light, at Great Ryburgh (HER 11360), Tacolneston (HER 35831)³⁹ and Salle (HER 50246, NMS-76AEA1). That from Great Ryburgh is a well-proportioned piece with the god's right arm raised, presumably in the act of casting a thunderbolt. The Salle example has its right arm lowered, perhaps to hold a patera, the left held up, probably to grasp a sceptre. The Tacolneston specimen is headless and missing most of its limbs; the right arm is outstretched and holds an unidentified object, probably a thunderbolt.

Jupiter's son, the demigod Hercules was rather more popular. His legendary *Virtus*, the heroic courage which enabled him to complete his labours and defeat monsters inimical to mankind formed a suitable point of reference for warriors and soldiers. Like Mars, however, he does not appear to have been overly revered in Norfolk, although a small figurine from Brampton missing its lower right arm but with the characteristic lionskin draped over the left does depict him (NWHCM 1985.442.1). Presumably, the reasons are the same; with few soldiers based in Norfolk until the later third century there were few men who would naturally look towards Hercules for help and patronage.

An unusual import is a seated figure of Isis suckling the infant Horus from Skepton (HER 36588, NMS496). It must attest some interest in the Egyptian pantheon and it is difficult to see it as anything other than the property of a traveller although other evidence for the worship of Isis is known from Roman Britain, including a temple to the goddess at London.⁴⁰

Other figurines also portray less well encountered deities. A figurine from Billingford (no HER number, HESH-A1B593) missing head and feet but with exaggerated male genitalia might represent Priapus. Another, from Felbrigg (HER 33827, NWHCM 1999.122.1), most probably does show the god.⁴¹ The male figure's short tunic is pulled back to reveal genitalia. A statuette from Scole, described as being made of lead, has also been identified as a Priapus (HER 30650).

Perhaps the finest substantially complete statuette to be recovered in recent years was found at Ashby-with-Oby (HER 39918, NMS-038224, Fig. 3, no. 14). A youthful satyr, beautifully modelled, is depicted in a prancing pose, his weight balanced on his right leg which is thrust slightly forward. A *nebris* covers part of his chest; he is otherwise naked. His left arm, broken just above the elbow, is raised at a right angle to his body and would probably have held

³³ Gurney 1992, p. 367

³⁴ Gurney 1994, p. 109

³⁵ Gurney 1997, p. 542

³⁶ Gurney 1995b, p. 225

³⁷ Worrell 2009, pp. 304-5

³⁸ Henig 1984, pp. 50-1

³⁹ Gurney 2001, p. 700

⁴⁰ Henig 1984, pp. 113-6

⁴¹ Gurney 1999, p. 362. Also see Johns and Henig 1991 and Plouviez 2005

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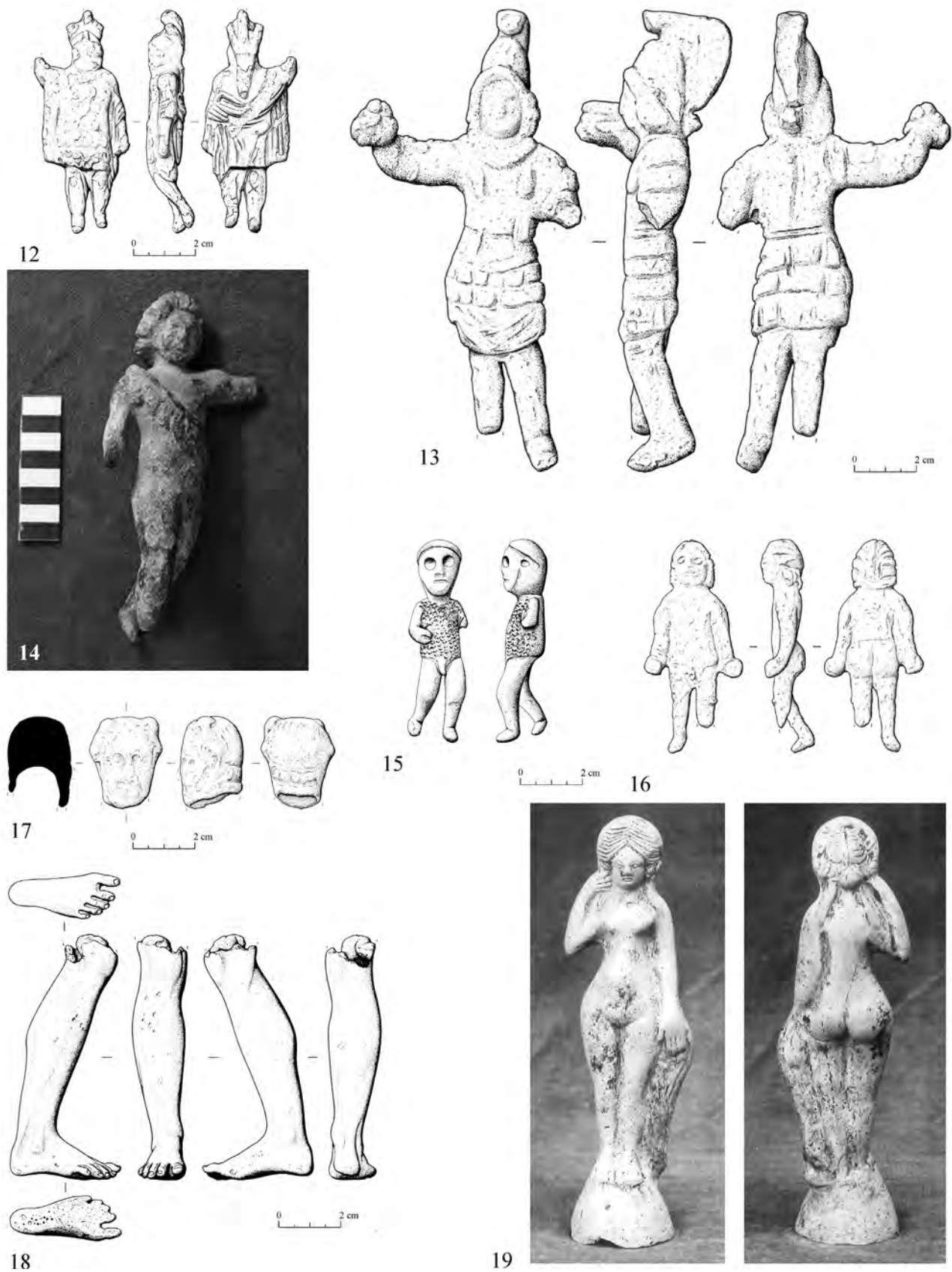


FIG. 3, 12-3 MARS FROM INGOLDISTHORPE AND BEIGHTON. 14 SATYR, ASHBY-WITH-OBY, 15 PROBABLE SATYR, BANHAM, 16 UNIDENTIFIED GOD, ACLE, 17 HEAD, BRAMPTON, 18 FRAGMENT OF LEG, ACLE (ALL HES), 19 PIPECLAY VENUS FIGURINE, BRAMPTON (NMS)

aloft a bunch of grapes whilst the right, broken just below the elbow, trails at his side. This object is almost certainly of first-century Italian manufacture and thus represents a relatively early import into the British provinces.

Satyrs are numbered among the followers of Bacchus and feature on a number of objects from East Anglia, in particular the Mildenhall great dish and the gold buckle plate from the Thetford Treasure mentioned above. Does this object represent an imported luxury item, brought over for a wealthy Icenian eager to demonstrate both his *Romanitas* and his loyalty to the old tribal god of his people? The figurine does not have the goat legs of true *Fauni* but satyrs were analogous to these woodland creatures and would have provided a subtle point of reference for followers of Faunus himself and the Icenian deity with whom he had possibly been identified.

A figurine that is much less Classical in its modelling was found at Banham (HER 32136, Fig. 3, no. 15).⁴² Although it has flattened areas at the rear, suggesting that it may have been mounted in some way, the modelling is so three-dimensional that it is best to treat this piece as a figurine and not a mount. The somewhat grotesque statuette is in the form of a male who prances forward, naked except for a figure-hugging piece of clothing perhaps best described as a tank top. His left arm is broken just below the shoulder whilst his right, claw-like, hand is held to his chest. The oversized head has huge eye sockets that would presumably have originally held glass insets as has been noted on a number of other Romano-Celtic statuettes. A groove running transversely across the forehead gives the impression that this rather monstrous little statuette is wearing a spaceman's helmet. The figure's posture, however, prancing forward as it does, echoes that of the Ashby-with-Oby statuette whilst the tank-top is suggestive in some ways of a *nebris*, the fawn skin in which satyrs are clad. This is probably a locally-produced version of a satyr, manufactured by a local artisan who did not quite understand the subject.

Another small figurine found at Matlask (HER 36550) may also depict a satyr.⁴³ Although badly damaged with the head and most of the arms and legs missing, the pose is consistent with such an attribution. The right arm is raised and the figure seems to be prancing forward with the weight balanced on the left leg and the right lifted up somewhat.

Two odd statuettes defy easy identification. The first, from Acle (HER 50193, Fig. 3, no. 16) is puzzling on account of the fact that it does not really resemble any known deity.⁴⁴ The male figure stands with knees slightly bent and arms by its side, and his hairstyle is at odds with anything that might be expected from a Roman male figurine. It recalls

somewhat the elaborate hairstyles of early third-century emperors. Nonetheless, the statuette is undoubtedly that of a man. The piece is crude in appearance, the arms being joined to the torso along their entire length and the fists blob-like and undefined. The surfaces are unfinished and one's first impression is of a figurine that was awaiting further treatment.

A second figurine from Hethersett (HER 16870) is remarkably similar in its posture and, if anything, even more crudely produced. The right hand seems to support an object that may have been intended to represent a club and this, together with the suggestion of a lionskin headdress, has led to the piece being described as a Hercules although this identification is far from certain. The piece is as unfinished as the first.

There are a number of fragments, broken arms, legs and so forth. An enormously worn and abraded torso from Leziate (HER 28955) with a head and only the stumps of its limbs is almost certainly Roman in date but is utterly illegible. Other fragments are sometimes more useful.

For example, a hand grasping a purse from Cawston (HER 19522, NMS-82E021) clearly comes from a figurine of Mercury. Given the presence of the purse, it can be nothing else, a demonstration that sometimes the smallest part of a lost whole can be informative. From Methwold (HER 22637) a head from a statue has been described as of Minerva.

A hollow cast head discovered at Brampton (HER 38154, Fig. 3, no. 17), is somewhat enigmatic. It is possible that this object was originally a mount but an identification as the head of a statuette is far more compelling. The modelling appears to have been fine although corrosion has removed the surfaces and obliterated the nature of certain details. In particular, this heavily corroded condition renders interpretation of the knobbly features at the side of the forehead and just below rather difficult. If a laurel wreath was intended then it is possible that this head represents an emperor of the second century, perhaps Antoninus Pius (AD138-61). On the balance of probabilities, however, it seems more likely that the protrusions represent a pair of horns above a pair of goat-like ears. If this is the case then the most likely subject is the god Faunus. The piece is probably relatively early in date, of the first or second century, and, like the satyr statuette discussed above, may have been of Italian manufacture.

Three other heads of uncertain identity have been found. The fragment of what appears to have been the top of the head of a relatively large piece of sculpture from Riddlesworth (HER 30519) seems to have been directly damaged by fire. From Kenninghall a hollow cast head is almost certainly a surviving fragment from a figurine but the damaged and worn state renders further analysis impossible (HER 31412, NMS-2D5AE1). The top of a head from Emneth (HER 31622) lacks horns and wings,

⁴² Gurney 1997, p. 542, fig. 2A

⁴³ Gurney 2002, p. 155

⁴⁴ Marsden 2012a, p. 58, fig. 4.6, Rogerson and Ashley 2008, p. 429, fig. 3.10

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eliminating a number of possibilities in terms of its subject.⁴⁵

A left arm bent at the elbow from Hockwold (HER 5587, NMS-23F215) represents a partial survival from another statuette deposited at one of that site's shrines whilst another left arm comprising hand and forearm broken at the elbow from Old Hunstanton (HER 29563) has a tinned or silvered surface and given its large size (about 10cm) must have originally formed part of a large figure. A rather crudely-produced hand wearing a bracelet from Letheringsett-with-Glandford represents all that remains of another figurine (HER 33796, NMS-AOF425).

A hand holding a pine branch that must have originally formed part of a beautifully made statuette of a youth, a *dendropheros* or tree-bearer, was found at Hockwold (NWHCM 1962.396.106). This character was connected to the cult of Attis, consort of Cybele, and suggests the existence of yet another shrine there. There is other evidence that Cybele had a following in Roman Britain.⁴⁶

A very finely rendered fragment of a leg from Acle is a highly impressive piece, so beautifully made that individual toenails are distinguished and the arteries at the back of the calf are visible (HER 42032, NMS-3CECC3, Fig. 3, no. 18).⁴⁷ The leg is broken at the knee but the figurine of which it once formed a part must have been relatively large, around a foot tall, and were it complete would have made this statuette amongst the largest so far discovered from Norfolk. It was found in the field next to that where one of the crude and curious figurines just discussed was discovered (HER 50193), raising interesting questions as to the nature of the site which must surely have had a religious element. However, in terms of its quality it is of a completely different order and must surely have been an import. It is to be hoped that more of this statuette may come to light in the future but the discovery of a large cake of bronze very close by raises the unhappy possibility that metalworking was taking place at the site and the Acle leg represents the only surviving limb of a statuette melted down as scrap.⁴⁸

A fragment representing the lower part of a left leg and foot from Dunton (HER 7112) may be from a figurine or may be a complete votive whilst a foot from Narford (HER 54758, NMS-2173A7) is clearly broken from a statuette, traces of solder surviving on the underside.

Finally, although they are not made of metal, the small number of pipeclay figurines found in Norfolk is deserving of mention. Examples of the most popular type, or parts thereof, depicting Venus, have been noted from Hockwold (HER 5351, NWHCM 1958.380), Brampton (NWHCM 1961.199.54)⁴⁹ and Scole (1962.590.1) with the major part

of another example being recovered during excavations at Brancaster.⁵⁰ An abraded example from North Wootton (HER 29076) also almost certainly represents Venus. A fragment, a female posterior that is undoubtedly a portion of a Venus figure was recovered during the recent excavations at Caistor St Edmund in 2012.⁵¹

Another pipeclay figurine of Venus, a fine complete example, is represented by a photograph in the Brampton excavation archive from Dr. Keith Knowles' earlier excavations in the 1960s now held at the Castle Museum (Fig. 3, no. 19). Its present whereabouts are unknown and there seems to be no record of the figurine in the rest of the records although it is to be hoped that more information will come to light when the archive is fully investigated. Another from the same excavations, missing its head and feet, is currently in the Castle Museum archive from the site but has yet to be accessioned.

Figurines (or parts thereof) of a Dea Nutrix have been found at Denver (HER 4235, NWHCM 1967.587) and Brancaster.⁵² The final fragments worth mentioning are two joining pieces representing a shoulder and the lower torso of a male wearing a short cloak discovered during the 2012 Caistor St Edmund excavations; this must have been part of a Mercury.⁵³

Zoomorphic figurines

A number of animal figurines have been recovered in recent years.⁵⁴ The function of these objects is of cardinal importance. Given the fact that so many have been discovered at sites which had a religious dimension, it seems certain that they were votive in nature. Were they, as Green has suggested, intended to represent various gods in an animal guise?⁵⁵ The answer here is probably not. It seems more likely that they were intended to represent living animals and function as offerings in the form of creatures sacred to a particular deity. Thus they might be said to have stood in for the beast in question, providing a less messy alternative to the actual sacrifice of a live animal.

A fragment of the hollow cast head of a lion found at Banham (HER 28766), comprising the ears and part of the mane, may be from a large figurine but is perhaps more likely to have been a portion of a mount.⁵⁶ A lion, from Ashwellthorpe (HER 30205)⁵⁷, this time complete apart from damage to some of the legs, appears to have stood upon a base, now missing, whilst another, from Gunthorpe

⁵⁰ Hinchliffe and Sparey Green 1985, p. 58, no. 131

⁵¹ Natasha Harlow personal communication

⁵² Jenkins in Green 1977, p. 87

⁵³ Natasha Harlow personal communication

⁵⁴ A boar of lead alloy from Foxley, although recorded on the PAS website (BH-CDA5A2), is most likely of relatively modern date. It does not appear Roman and the presence of a casting seam, must surely count against anything other than a Post-medieval date

⁵⁵ Green 1977, p. 305

⁵⁶ Gurney 1996, p. 391

⁵⁷ Gurney 1994, p. 108

⁴⁵ Gurney 1996, p. 392

⁴⁶ Henig 1984, pp. 110-3

⁴⁷ Worrell and Pearce 2012, pp. 374-5

⁴⁸ Marsden 2012b, p. 376

⁴⁹ Jenkins in Green 1977, p. 87 (fig. 36, no. 239)

(HER 28847), was also most probably a vessel mount although its three-dimensional rendering also places it in the realm of statuettes. It could have been religious in function, lions being associated with Hercules.⁵⁸

A representation of a leopard or panther from Hainford (HER 42543, NMS-5012F4, Fig. 4, no. 20) was almost certainly a votive connected with the cult of Bacchus.⁵⁹ It is incomplete, only the torso, neck and part of the head surviving.

An unusual figurine of what appears to be a cat from Swanton Morley (HER 17486, Fig. 4, no. 21) is unlikely to be related to the worship of Bacchus. It could belong to the secular realm and indeed finds parallels in a range of small animal figures in both copper alloy and jet but the possibility that it was a votive of some kind cannot be discounted.⁶⁰

An object long in Norwich Castle Museum's collection and said to have been found at Caister-on-Sea (NWHCM 1894.76.725) takes the form of a dog-like animal, perhaps a jackal, standing upon a plinth. This probably formed the top of a sceptre or wand and, if this is the case, it is an important cult object. A heavily abraded dog figurine, this time probably a votive, was recovered from North Walsham (HER 34682).⁶¹ The dog was associated with the goddess Nehalennia whose worship is attested in Germany and the Low Countries.⁶² If this was a votive, then trading contacts and cultural affinities could explain her worship in Norfolk.⁶³

Horse figurines are known, a rather abstract-looking example from Banningham (HER 50376, NMS-DA9D68), one from Bunwell (HER 10007, NWHCM 1985.378.147)⁶⁴ and the fragment of another from Hillington (HER 32137, NMS811). Another standing horse is recorded from Bradenham (no HER number available). Given the large amounts of Iron Age horse furniture from the Icenian realms and the probability that this relates to horse-breeding, these figurines may well reflect a continued interest in the raising of horses in the Roman period. They possibly represent votives dedicated to Epona, goddess of Horses although the only sculpture of Epona known from Britain is from Colchester.⁶⁵

A number of figurines of rams and goats have been found in Norfolk in recent years. Sometimes it is difficult to differentiate one species from the other. These horned animals were sacred to Mercury and are invariably said

to have been connected with that god. However, as a protector of flocks, goats, rams and lambs would also have been suitable as sacrifices to Faunus, echoing on one level the goatskin *nebris* worn by satyrs.

A charming example of a goat from Great Walsingham has already been mentioned⁶⁶. Another, crude and rather flat, is known from the same site. A well-modelled goat recently found at Quidenham is of a higher artistic standard (HER 58462, NMS-C71211, Fig. 4, no. 22) and another, from South Walsham, is also pleasing to the eye, despite its rather outsized head (HER 39988, Fig. 2, no. 23). A well composed ram with a long coat is known from Newton Flotman (HER 40445, NMS-100220)⁶⁷ and another from Hethersett with rather a long neck (HER 25509) squats realistically with its front legs spread out in front. Other caprids and ovids include examples from Wymondham (HER 33069)⁶⁸, Caistor St Edmund (HER 9815⁶⁹ and HER 12872) and a rather crudely-produced specimen from Postwick with Witton (HER 13603, NMS-419374).

A very stylised figurine of a hare from Stanfield (HER 58543, KENT-9B0EB4) is unusual; its front legs bear a passing resemblance to *phalli* and this suggestion of fertility is very apt given that hares were sacred to Venus. It is an unusual object, however, and stands apart from the normal run of votive figurines.

As we have seen from the Walsingham and Hockwold assemblages, figurines of cockerels were popular and several have been found at other sites. With his cry the cockerel heralds the dawn and so came to be associated with Mercury, herald of the gods. A crudely-made cockerel with an exaggerated wattle and rather large head was recently discovered at Paston (HER 58885, NMS-A07183, Fig. 4, no. 24) whilst others are known from Ashwellthorpe (HER 30205)⁷⁰, Binham (HER 24150), Caistor St Edmund (NWHCM 1894.76.725), Costessey (HER 25624), Merton (HER 21484), Quidenham (HER 10792)⁷¹, Quidenham (HER 30382) and Wicklewood (HER 8897)⁷², whilst an example missing its head and feet was found at Weybourne (HER 29097). A heavily abraded figurine from Walsingham almost certainly represents another cockerel (HER 17543, NMS-687685). Three small cockerel figures have (or would have had) suspension loops; they may have been pendants, serving an amuletic function, or small steelyard weights. Examples are known from Beeston-with-Bittering (HER 4084)⁷³, Scole (HER 39960, Fig. 4, no. 25)⁷⁴ and Shouldham (No HER number recorded).⁷⁵

⁵⁸ Rogerson and Ashley 2008, p. 429, fig. 3.12

⁵⁹ Gurney 2007, p. 254, fig. 2F

⁶⁰ See Toynbee 1964, pp. 126-7, plate XXXIV for a dog from Lydney, Gloucestershire, Crummy 1983, p. 144, fig. 175 for a hare in jet from Colchester and Worrell and Pearce 2011, pp. 407-8, for a mouse from Hayton, East Yorks. Also Crummy 2010 for a series of jet figurines

⁶¹ Gurney 2000, p. 518

⁶² Henig 1984, p. 55

⁶³ Nash-Briggs 2011

⁶⁴ Gregory 1986

⁶⁵ Huskinson 1994, no. 14

⁶⁶ Bagnall Smith 1999, p. 31, no. 13

⁶⁷ Gurney 2005, p. 742

⁶⁸ Gurney 1998, p. 188

⁶⁹ Gurney 1994, p. 108

⁷⁰ Gurney 2005, p. 741

⁷¹ Gurney 1995b, p. 225

⁷² Gurney 2001, p. 700

⁷³ Gurney 1999, p. 362, fig. 3

⁷⁴ Gurney 2007, p. 254, fig. 3A.

⁷⁵ Gurney 2004, p. 568, fig. 2C. Worrell 2004, pp. 326-7, no. 10

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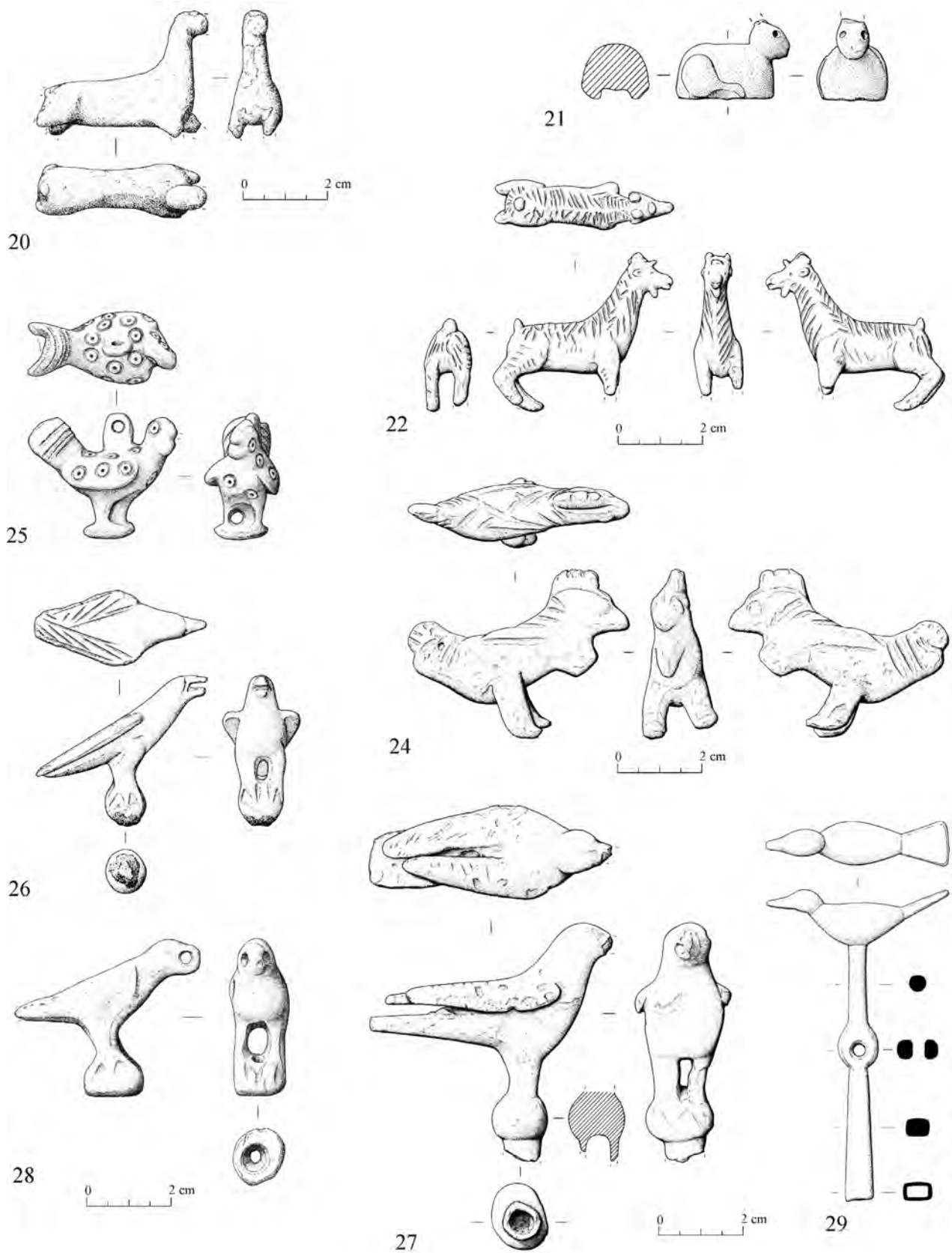


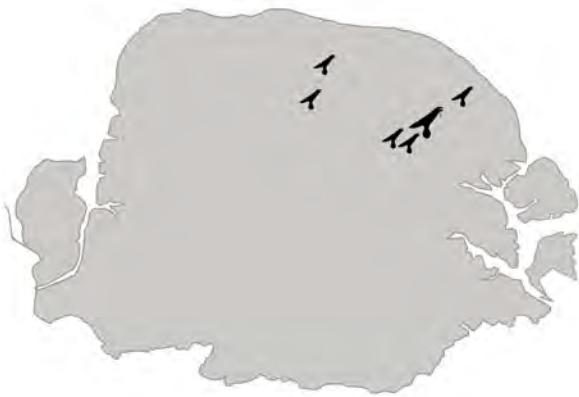
FIG. 4, 20 PANTHER, HAINFORD, 21 CAT, SWANTON MORLEY, 22 GOAT, QUIDENHAM, 24 COCKEREL, PASTON, 25 COCKEREL WITH SUSPENSION LOOP, SCOLE, 26-9 CORVIDS FROM PASTON, BURGH AND TUTTINGTON, BRININGHAM AND LETHERINGSETT-WITH-GLANDFORD (NHES)

Perhaps the most interesting group of zoomorphic figurines is the small number depicting ravens.⁷⁶ Those from the Felmingham hoard have already been mentioned; others have appeared from Paston (HER 6893, Fig. 4, no. 26),⁷⁷ Burgh and Tuttington (HER 33592, NMS-AE10F0, Fig. 4, no. 27),⁷⁸ Briningham (HER 44766, NMS-F46436, Fig. 4, no. 28)⁷⁹ and Aylsham (HER 24510).

It is noteworthy that all examples conform to a similar pattern. All are clearly corvids and the majority also sit on a globe and carry a small sphere in their beak. All examples also have traces of an iron attachment inserted into the base; from the Felmingham examples it is clear that these are the remains of the iron sceptres which the birds topped. Thus they are perhaps more correctly described as terminals or mounts.

Another, similar, example has been recorded from Letheringsett-with-Glandford (HER 33796, Fig. 4, no. 29); here the bird perches atop an integral shaft with a pierced circular expansion along its length.⁸⁰ In these respects it differs from the other examples but clearly comes from a similar tradition.

Rogerson and Ashley have made the interesting discovery that the findspots of these ravens cluster in north-east Norfolk (Map 2) and have also noted that the Roman name for Brancaster, *Branodunum*, translates as Raven Fort.⁸¹ It is unlikely, especially given the fact that this area of Norfolk is not particularly productive in terms of Roman finds, that this spread is a coincidence.



MAP 2 DISTRIBUTION OF RAVEN MOUNTS

Ravens were associated with the sun god Apollo and their flight was reckoned to convey omens.⁸² Here the head wearing a radiate crown from Felmingham is interesting. Was Apollo, perhaps equated with a Celtic god of the Sun, worshipped in this area? The head from Felmingham is bearded but the syncretism of the two deities could explain this. The nature of what we might term the Raven Cult in north-east Norfolk must remain uncertain for the time being but a solar nature of some sort for the deity seems likely.

Other anthropomorphic and zoomorphic objects modelled in the round

Within the ambit of the so-called Minor Arts there are a range of objects depicting gods or animals, most notably steelyard weights and key or knife handles, but these have at best a secondary religious function. They may reflect the beliefs of their original owners but it is more likely that they are simply ornamental items of metalwork. Significantly, they are also not often found at sites with any evidence of a religious function, further implying that they belong to a more secular environment. Nonetheless, some of the more important examples should be mentioned since they do, after all, depict anthropomorphic or zoomorphic subjects even if they do not fall within the realm of religious objects.

Steelyard weights frequently depict deities or supernatural creatures. Several examples have been found in Norfolk. The most impressive, the head of a child satyr (NMS-FE90E7, Fig. 5, no. 30) with the distinctive topknot worn by children in the Roman empire, was found in the Burgh Castle area and is probably the largest example of a steelyard weight from Norfolk. A number of Minerva heads have surfaced, notably from Langley-with-Hardley (HER 49581) and Wymondham (HER 40446, NMS-E80FE4) whilst a female head wearing a high diadem, perhaps Venus, was unearthed at Narford (HER 3974).⁸³ Another in the form of a raven was found in the 19th century at Caistor St Edmund (NWHCM 1894.76.731).

Many key handles and, to a lesser extent, knife handles have also been recorded over the years. A key handle in the shape of a lion mauling a man was recovered during excavations in the 1960s and 1970s at the Roman settlement of Brampton and is now in the Castle Museum, Norwich (Fig. 5, no. 31). From Shouldham (HER 4255) comes a handle depicting a hound springing from a four-petalled flower.⁸⁴ A knife handle in the form of a charging boar from Ditchingham (HER 22255, Fig. 5, no. 32) is rendered to striking effect.⁸⁵ From Saham Toney (HER 4697, SF-83E2E0) an object probably best interpreted as a handle in the form of a dog who squats on a small pedestal is one of the most charming representations of this animal recorded from Roman Norfolk.⁸⁶ There are many more key

⁷⁶ Rogerson & Ashley 2010, pp. 124-8

⁷⁷ Rogerson and Ashley 2010, pp. 125-8, fig. 3.14

⁷⁸ Rogerson and Ashley 2010, pp. 125-8, fig. 3.15

⁷⁹ Gurney 2007, p. 254, fig. 2B

⁸⁰ Rogerson & Ashley 2008, p. 429, fig. 2.7

⁸¹ Rogerson and Ashley 2010, pp. 125-8 and Rivet and Smith 1981, p. 274

⁸² Grimal 1986, p. 50

⁸³ Gurney 2004, p. 567

⁸⁴ Rogerson and Ashley 2012, p. 411

⁸⁵ Gurney 2005, p. 742, fig. 5A. Worrell 2004, 327, no. 11

⁸⁶ Rogerson and Ashley 2010, p. 128, fig. 3.17

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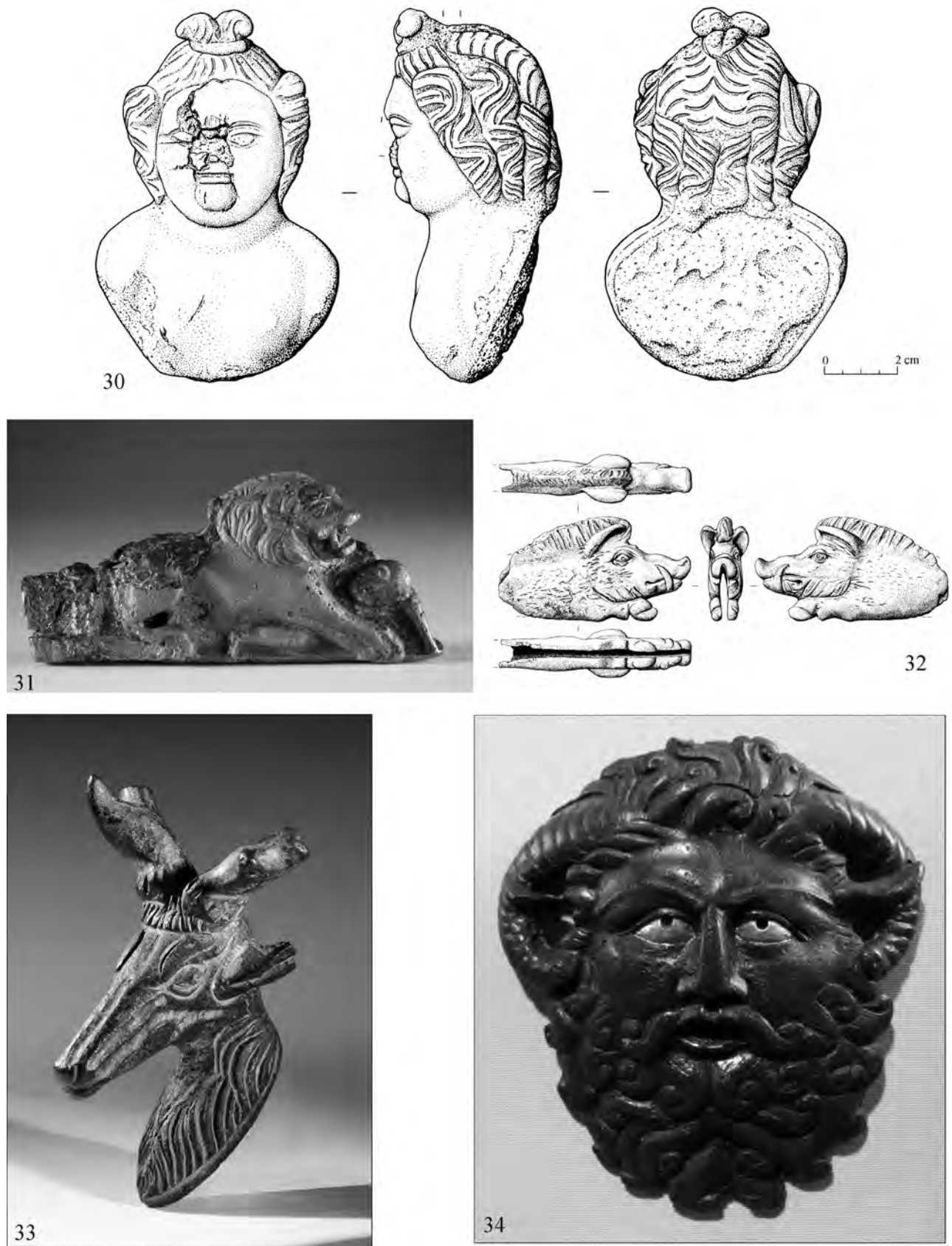


FIG. 5. 30 CHILD SATYR'S HEAD STEELYARD WEIGHT, BURGH CASTLE, 31 KEY HANDLE IN THE FORM OF A LION MAULING A MAN, BRAMPTON (NMS), 32 FOLDING KNIFE HANDLE IN THE SHAPE OF A BOAR, DITCHINGHAM (NOT TO SCALE, LENGTH 51MM) (BOTH NHES), 33 PROTOME OF A STAG, BRAMPTON, 34 FAUNUS HEAD MOUNT, THETFORD (NMS)

and knife handles featuring animals such as a key handle in the form of confronted dolphins from Brampton (HER 35055, NMS-5B4425).⁸⁷

So-called spatula handles in the form of Minerva busts represent a well-known type of object. The head of the goddess of wisdom would have been an apt item to place atop an object intended for writing. Examples are known from a number of sites, including Beeston-with-Bittering (HER 4084),⁸⁸ Fransham (HER 30424), Mileham (HER 30999)⁸⁹, Sporle-with-Palgrave (HER 34520) and a piece that was surely the head from another found at Wicklewood (NWHCM 1985.380.3).

Anthropomorphic and zoomorphic mounts

It is profitable to continue by considering the various mounts in bronze depicting deities which have been recovered from sites in Norfolk. To what extent they are religious in function is uncertain – some could simply have served as decorative additions to secular vessels, ewers and the like – but, given the possibility that some at least may have been of a religious nature, a full survey is desirable. Many mounts in the form of animals have been found but, as with the objects just discussed, these most probably do not have a religious dimension and so have in general been excluded. For example, a fine protome of a stag's head from Brampton (NWHCM L1975.16.12, Fig. 5, no. 33), although a striking piece of art, most probably belongs to the secular realm.⁹⁰

Probably the most impressive vessel mount from Norfolk is a large, finely-rendered face from the Thetford area (Fig. 5, no. 34).⁹¹ The full beard is composed of sinuous curls and a pair of ram's horns curve downwards around the goat-like ears. A broad face frames penetrating, silvered eyes. A cast is on display in Norwich Castle Museum; the illustration published here is a photograph of this replica.

Another visually arresting mount from Elsing (HER 30334, NWHCM L1993.7, Fig. 2, no. 35) depicts a facing bust with the sharp, twisted features of a satyr topped with a pair of horns.⁹² It is interesting in that it mixes the horns of Faunus with the facial physiognomy of a satyr, demonstrating the way in which the god and the followers of Bacchus were, at least on this piece of art, perhaps understood to be one and the same. Traces of solder show that this mask would have been attached to a vessel, probably a bronze ewer.

A powerful mask forming one of the attachment points of a vessel handle from Feltwell (HER 22920, Fig. 6, no. 36) features the head of Faunus with horns curling outwards

from the centre of his forehead and a long, luxuriant beard. This is an evocative piece of work and the fierce stare of the god compels the viewer's attention. It may belong to the secular realm but given its subject matter it is more likely that it furnished part of a vessel used in a ritual capacity.

A vessel mount from Kenninghall (HER 35131, Fig. 6, no. 37), described when originally published as being in the form of a goat's head, appears in fact to be a rather bestial representation of Faunus or Pan.⁹³ The leering, rather frightening face is topped by a monstrous pair of horns.

Another, rather abraded, mount from Cawston (HER 30455, NMS-57CB72, NWHCM 2008.254, Fig. 6, no. 38) depicts a somewhat more human-looking version of the god.⁹⁴ The stubs of horns projecting from his forehead betray his identity.

A very small circular mount from Caistor St Edmund (HER 31803, NMS-48BF58, Fig. 6, no. 39) also appears to depict Faunus.⁹⁵ The face is framed by swirling curls which, on the forehead, appear to suggest horns. They certainly do not appear to represent the topknot appropriate to a Cupid or child satyr and the hair at the side of the cheeks, clearly representing a beard, further militate against such an identification.

An interesting object from Ormesby St. Margaret (HER 56260; Fig. 6, no. 40) almost certainly depicts a horned god. The solid, rather square-shaped, head has traces of a rivet on the base, suggesting it was originally a mount from furniture. At first glance the projections on the forehead might appear to represent the wings sprouting from Mercury's *petasos*, his winged cap. However, on closer inspection, it is clear that the rather irregular grooved patterning on the head represents hair and the projections are horns.

A number of other mounts depicts satyrs, including a vessel mount from Mundham (HER 28342) which depicts the facing head of a youthful satyr with the characteristic child's topknot. A solid, flat mount said to be from Caistor St Edmund (NWHCM 1894.76.710) is decorated with a satyr holding a bunch of grapes. A circular mount found at Besthorpe (HER 29171), probably best described as a box mount, has a facing bust in high relief that, with its bald and bearded head, appears to figure Bacchus' elderly companion Silenus. Another from Horsham St Faith (HER 30074) probably also figures the same subject.

Bacchus himself is known from only one vessel mount, an attractive, three-dimensional bust with vine leaves decorating the subject's hair. This is a very old find, said to come from Caister-on-Sea (NWHCM 1894.76.724). It represents the only example known to the author of an item of Roman metalwork from Norfolk that depicts the god.

⁸⁷ Gurney 2005, p. 741

⁸⁸ Gurney 2006, p. 117, fig. 3C

⁸⁹ Gurney 1996, p. 392, fig. 3B

⁹⁰ Henig 1995, p. 97, fig 62. Bagnall Smith 1999, p. 47, does ascribe this a religious significance

⁹¹ Davies 1996, p. 382

⁹² Gurney 1995b, p. 224, Davies 1996, 380 and Marsden 2012a, pp. 54-5

⁹³ Gurney 2003, p. 360, fig. 3D

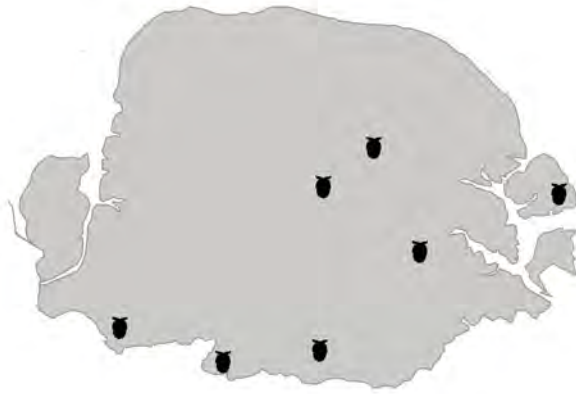
⁹⁴ Rogerson and Ashley 2008, p. 429, fig. 3.9. Marsden 2012, p. 55

⁹⁵ Rogerson and Ashley 2012, pp. 409-11

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FIG. 6, 36 FAUNUS ESCUTCHEON, FELTWELL, 37 VESSEL MOUNT, KENNINGHALL, 38 VESSEL MOUNT, CAWSTON, 39 MOUNT, CAISTOR ST EDMUND, 40 HEAD OF FAUNUS, ORMESBY, 41 MERCURY HEAD, WOODBASTWICK, 42 PROBABLE JUPITER HEAD MOUNT, THORPE, 43 MEDUSA HEAD MOUNT, BEESTON-WITH-BITTERING, 44 MOUNT IN THE FORM OF A FEMALE HEAD, HORNINGTOFT (ALL NHES)



MAP 3 DISTRIBUTION OF FAUNUS MOUNTS

It is remarkable that so many of the mounts that have appeared in recent years depict Faunus. They surely demonstrate that the Thetford *collegium* was not an isolated group and that Faunus was a popular god throughout Norfolk, a supposition strengthened by study of a distribution map of the material relating to the god (Map 3). Davies commented nearly twenty years ago that representations of Pan (or Faunus) were uncommon in Britain and the Western half of the empire and this holds true today, practically nothing relating to the god being recorded on the PAS database.⁹⁶ The lack of material featuring Bacchus is equally strange.

Bagnall Smith suggests that Faunus was equated with both Bacchus and Silvanus in Norfolk but the lack of material depicting or naming Bacchus himself seems instead to suggest that Faunus had rather usurped Bacchus' place in the county. The items relating to Silvanus all occur some distance away in Essex, in an area falling within the boundaries of the tribe of the Trinovantes.⁹⁷

Compared to the number of statuettes depicting Mercury, mounts in the form of the god are very few indeed. It is good that the one certain mount, presumably from furniture, and found very recently at Woodbastwick (HER 51187, NMS-800B35, Fig. 6, no. 41), is such a large and splendid example. A youthful-looking Mercury, with eyes carefully defined, wears a *petasos* atop a wreath of what seem to be vine leaves in his hair. The iconography is interesting, surely suggesting a reference to Bacchus. This is an unusual piece of syncretism which seems unparalleled in Romano-British art. It implies a connection was to be sought in the minds of those viewing it between the very popular Mercury and Bacchus in whose train the satyrs danced. A Hadrianic or perhaps an Antonine date in the second century is almost certain.

A bust and head modelled in the round found at Stoke Holy Cross (HER 9732) also depicts Mercury. A *chlamys* adorns his shoulder and he wears a winged *petasos*. It is likely that it represents a furniture mount although the possibility that

it is the surviving, upper portion of a figurine cannot be fully discounted.

The sun god Sol, although very popular in the third century and represented on many coin issues of the period, does not seem to have found much of a following in Britain. Veneration of the god seems to have been more of a State cult promoted by the Danubian emperors of the later third century (who came from an area where worship of Sol was strong) than a religion with a local following. He is, however, represented on a mount from North Creak (HER 1913), a head with what appear to be rays projecting from its top. Another possible head of Sol with what appear to be strange, squared-off solar rays framing his head, was found at Fincham (HER 12595). Given the lack of popularity of the god in Norfolk generally we might suggest that these two pieces were owned by officials or members of the army.

A three-dimensional mount from Thorpe (listed in HER file 40273 but possibly found at HER 57973, NMS-451277, Fig. 6, no. 42) featuring a powerfully-rendered male head with a beaked nose may perhaps depict an emperor, the facial physiognomy being broadly consistent with portraits of Antoninus Pius (AD138-61), but it seems far more likely that Jupiter was the intended subject. The blistered iron shank strongly suggests a mount from some form of furniture.

A large circular furniture mount from Beeston-with-Bittering (HER 4084, Fig. 6, no. 43) originally published as depicting Mercury in fact features a facing head of Medusa.⁹⁸ Although probably not strictly belonging to the realm of religion, it is an important piece worthy of mention. A similar object occurred at Hockwold (HER 5587, NWHCM 2007.419.8).⁹⁹ The gaze of Medusa was reckoned to avert the evil eye and so the object does have some ritual significance. Medusa heads were also a popular device on cameos, a number being known from Roman Britain, including a number in onyx¹⁰⁰ and one in jet.¹⁰¹

A solid, three-dimensional mount from Horningtoft (HER 55326, NMS-4913E0, Fig. 6, no. 44) depicting a female head is difficult to identify with any particular goddess or personage. The style of the portrait is rather strange, indeed almost cat-like, with a narrow face, regressive chin and huge eyes. The hair is plaited into rows of bobbles which sweep back from the forehead. No close parallels can be found for this hairstyle which does not closely replicate any coiffure of Roman imperial date; however, mounts do exist depicting negroid heads which are broadly similar. It could be that this mount was intended to represent an African or it may have been a confused and misunderstood native rendering of one of the elaborate hairstyles of court ladies of the second and third centuries.

⁹⁶ Davies 1996, p. 380

⁹⁷ Bagnall Smith 1999, pp. 47-8

⁹⁸ Gurney 2006, p. 117, fig. 3B. Worrell 2006, 448-9

⁹⁹ Gurney 2002, p. 155

¹⁰⁰ Henig 2007, pp. 179-80, nos. 725-31

¹⁰¹ Henig 2007, p. 199, App. 53

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Alternatively, the plaits recall the dreadlocked hairstyle found on obverses of the Icenian Iron Age Bury type face-horse coins. These were struck in the late first century BC and feature a female head facing either right or left.¹⁰² The subject of these coins was probably a tribal goddess of the Iceni, offering the possibility that the Horningtoft head was also intended to depict this deity.

From Shouldham (HER 28645), an odd vessel mount is also difficult to interpret as depicting a particular personage. It takes the form of a head wearing what seems to be some sort of hood or hat with bun-like projections over the ears and transverse grooves running across the front of the head. It may have been recognisable as a divinity to those who viewed it but equally may have represented nothing more than a decorative mount.

A flat, facing head from Great Dunham (HER 4188) with a suspension loop above is another unusual piece.¹⁰³ It must surely have been attached to the rim of a vessel of some sort. The rather heavy facial physiognomy nonetheless suggests a female subject. The face is framed within a grooved border on each side, suggestive of vertical plaits, and above the forehead, a hairstyle with a central parting occupies the area between the face and the suspension loop. Any attempt at identifying the subject would be little better than guesswork.

There are a number of other mounts recorded but the descriptions leave some room for doubt as to the precise identity of their subjects. One from Thompson (HER 36089), with a top-knot and curling locks, has been suggested as a Cupid but an identification as a boy satyr is perhaps more accurate.¹⁰⁴

A rather strange lead plaque with a relief bust of Mercury holding a *caduceus* over his shoulder was found at Brampton.¹⁰⁵ Given that it is made of lead, it is unlikely to have functioned as a mount and it is perhaps best regarded as some sort of votive.

A strap slide from Bracon Ash in the form of a satyr's head (HER 29308, NMS-306471, Fig. 7, no. 45) closely parallels another from Great Walsingham except that it faces right and not left.¹⁰⁶ These objects are generally associated with the military but they would still have made suitable votives and the presence of these two at sites which have yielded other material of a religious significance suggests that this may have been their final function. An example from West Dereham (HER 44106) features a facing bust of Silenus, the companion of Bacchus and his satyrs. A similar piece, accompanied by a sketch in the records, is from Hockwold (HER 5351).

Other similar strap slides, one a satyr head example, the other decorated with the head of a large cat, presumably a leopard, have been sold on ebay in recent years. Described as having been found in Norfolk, the fact that they have neither a firm provenance nor have been seen in hand by the author means, sadly, that they cannot meaningfully contribute to this paper.¹⁰⁷ Another, taking the form of the snarling head of a big cat described as having been found in the Norwich area and now in a private collection, is perhaps worth including here (Fig. 7, no. 46). This and the others must originally have formed part of harness suites featuring Silenus, satyr and panther heads.

A rather appealing horse head from the Bracon Ash site mentioned above (HER 29308, NMS-0050A3, Fig. 7, no. 47) almost certainly has a votive significance. The flat back demonstrates that it was originally some kind of mount; it is broken at the neck and so it is uncertain whether it would have formed the head of a horse or a hippocamp. The execution is somewhat naive but forceful, conveying very well the nature of its subject.

A remarkable object, probably best described as the mount from the rim of a vessel although it could perhaps have functioned as a pendant, was recovered from Wicklewood (NWHCM 1983.43.7). This depicts the facing head of an elephant and its significance is difficult to understand. It could belong to the secular realm although it is perhaps more likely that the vessel of which it formed a part was connected to the worship of an Eastern cult. Interestingly, the elephant was associated with Bacchus.

Terminals in the shape of human or animal heads, probably from wands or sceptres, form a particular class of object. Some of these have in the past been assigned to the medieval period but it is far more likely that they are of Roman date. The one example in the form of a god's head, from Carleton Rode (HER 34589)¹⁰⁸, depicts a helmeted bust instantly identifiable as Mars. It is paralleled by a number of similar mounts mainly from the Fenland depicting imperial personages briefly discussed below.

Of the zoomorphic examples, one, with a head best described as resembling a griffin from Wickmere (HER 28524, NWHCM 2002.80, Fig. 2, no. 48) is reasonably closely paralleled by another, more bird-like in that it seems to lack the ears of the first example, from Attleborough (HER 33179). Wickmere, in north-east Norfolk, falls within the area where the corvid figurines discussed above were found. Griffins were associated with Apollo who, in the guise of Sol, was worshipped as a god of the sun. Thus, this object may connect in some way with the mount in the form of a god of the heavens from the Felmingham hoard as well as the corvid figurines themselves, ravens also having been sacred to Apollo.

¹⁰² See Talbot 2006 for a corpus of this series

¹⁰³ Gurney 1996, p. 391, fig. 2C

¹⁰⁴ Gurney 2002, p. 157

¹⁰⁵ Davies 1996, p. 382, fig. 3

¹⁰⁶ Bagnall Smith 1999, p. 30, no. 12

¹⁰⁷ A number of other objects with Bacchic iconography, including at least one panther figurine, have been noted on ebay, all sold by the same dealer based in South Norfolk. It is unfortunate that they cannot be included here

¹⁰⁸ Rogerson and Ashley 2008, p. 429, fig. 8

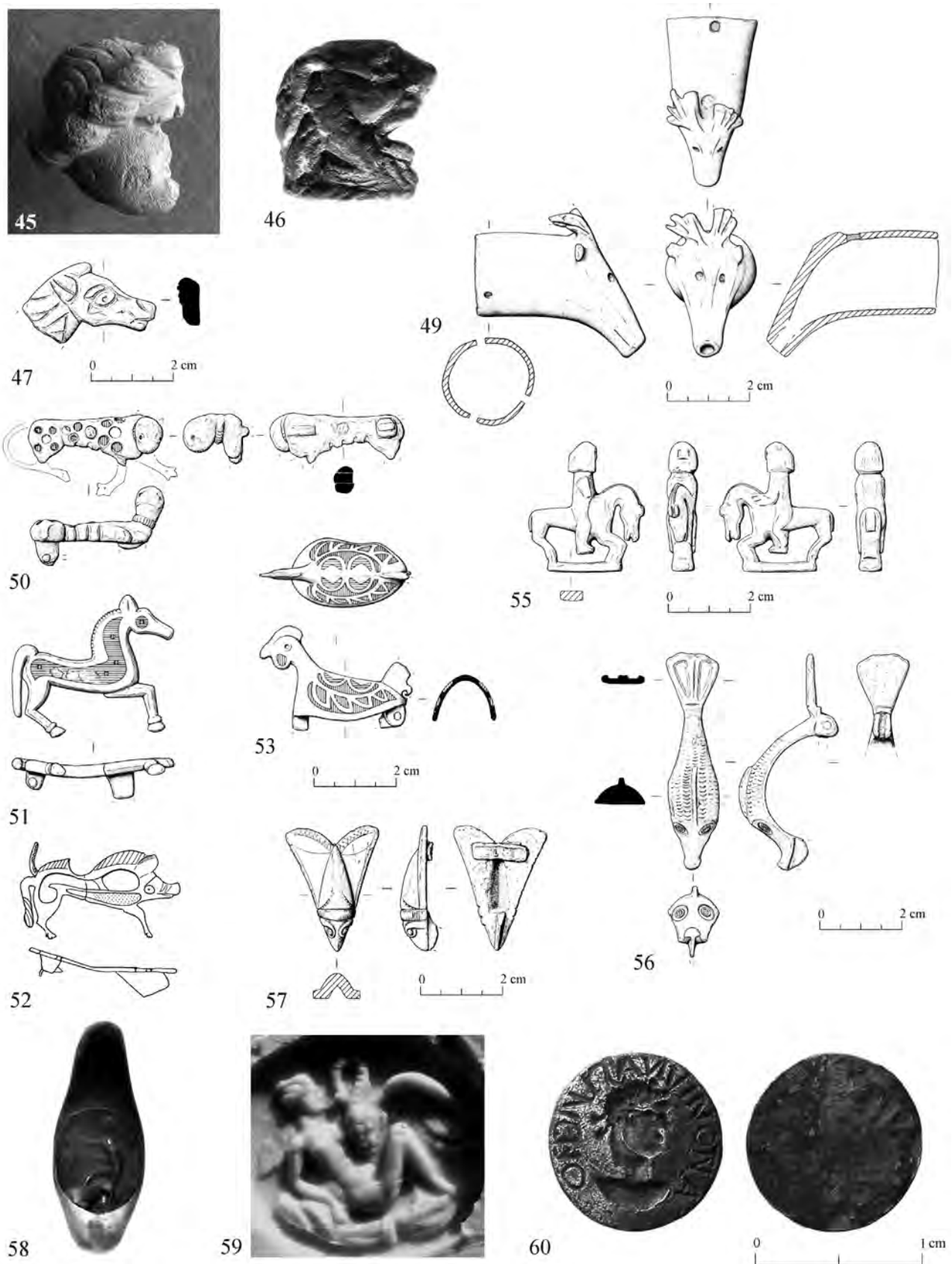


FIG. 7, 45 SATYR'S HEAD STRAP SLIDE, BRACON ASH (LENGTH 26MM), 46 LEOPARD HEAD STRAP SLIDE, NORWICH AREA (LENGTH 18MM), 47 HORSE HEAD, BRACON ASH, 49 STAG'S HEAD STAFF TERMINAL, ATTLEBOROUGH, 50 LEOPARD BROOCH, BRACON ASH, 51 HORSE BROOCH, HOCKWOLD, 52 BOAR BROOCH, HOCKWOLD, 53 CHICKEN BROOCH, HOCKWOLD, 55 HORSE AND RIDER FIGURINE, WARHAM, 56 BROOCH IN THE FORM OF A DOLPHIN, QUIDENHAM, 57 CICADA-LIKE BROOCH, PULHAM ST. MARY, 58 SILVER RING, CORNELIAN INTAGLIO WITH SATYR, WEYBOURNE, 59 IMPRESSION OF SEAL RING WITH LEDA AND THE SWAN, WALSINGHAM (LENGTH 10MM), 60 SILVER RING BEZEL, SWAFFHAM AREA (ALL NHES)

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Another terminal also, like the second mount just mentioned, from Attleborough (HER 30102, NMS-6FF7C4, NWCHM 2013.281, Fig. 7, no. 49), but this time in the form of a stag is interesting.¹⁰⁹ The stag was associated with Diana, Silvanus and the Celtic god Cernunnos and it may be that this sceptre was used in the worship of one of those gods. The stag was also used in the later Roman period as the badge of the province of *Britannia Superior* as is attested by a lead sealing from Burgh Castle.¹¹⁰ Alternatively, as woodland animals, stags may have been connected with Faunus. Attleborough is no great distance from Thetford.

A bull's head with its neck forming a socket for a wooden wand or staff found at Colkirk (HER 30867) most probably comprises another of these animal-headed terminals.¹¹¹ The bull had associations with a number of gods and it is probably unwise to try to speculate on the significance of this piece.

A wand or staff terminal from Walsingham (HER 29924, NMS-04B3C5) in the shape of a duck recalls Green's argument that this bird seems to have been associated with a water cult with connections to the sun and healing.¹¹² Many other small three-dimensional duck mounts are known which may or may not have a connection here such as examples from Dereham (HER 42555)¹¹³, Ditchingham (HER 29457), Little Cressingham (HER 35101, NMS49), Whissonsett (HER 31800) and Wymondham (HER 33031).

Zoomorphic brooches

Zoomorphic brooches, as the name suggests, are a type of plate brooch in the form of birds or animals.¹¹⁴ Most are three-dimensional with enamelled cells decorating the body. They seem to have appeared in the early second century and production most probably continued well into the third century. Many species are represented and it is likely that these objects had a religious significance, either as marks of affiliation to a particular deity with whom the creature was connected,¹¹⁵ or as a stand-in for the sacrifice of a living animal.¹¹⁶ They could be said to have represented a more sophisticated form of votive than the earlier brooches and certainly the bright enamelling apparent on many examples would have made them attractive and eye-catching objects when in their original state. With this emphasis on vivid colours they can be said to belong very much to the aesthetic of the third century and the more elaborate examples, if they do not belong to that period, certainly foreshadow it.

Three brooches are known in the form of leopards, one from Bunwell (HER 24456), one from Wighton (HER 3980) and another from Bracon Ash (HER 29308, NMS-E44886, Fig. 7, no. 50). Mackreth ascribes these a Continental origin which fits with their rarity as British finds.¹¹⁷ It is interesting that only four others are recorded on the PAS database.¹¹⁸ As with the figurine from Hainford mentioned above, these probably have Bacchic connections.

An incomplete and corroded brooch from Wreningham (HER 28868, NMS-3E18E5) probably represents a lion. Like the leopards discussed above, its pelt is decorated with small, circular enamelled cells but its more thickset neck suggests a mane and hence a lion. A flatter, more one-dimensional brooch from Long Stratton (HER 34468) is not enamelled. The chariot of Cybele was drawn by lions although the animal was also associated with the demigod Hercules on account of his defeating the Nemean lion.

A plate brooch in the form of a horse from Fincham (HER 33009) carries enamelled cells and is to all extents and purposes identical to a fragmentary specimen from Stanfield (HER 30600).¹¹⁹ Another example with blue enamelling from Hockwold (HER 52661, Fig. 7, no. 51) is similar. The horse could reference either the Celtic goddess Epona or the Roman god Neptune. The large amount of Iron Age horse furniture from Norfolk might suggest that the association was with Epona or an Icenian version thereof but it should also be remembered that the Caistor *defixio* mentioned above was addressed to Neptune.

Stag brooches are rare and only two are known from Norfolk. One, with incised decoration from Hockering (HER 34934),¹²⁰ is probably of Roman rather than Saxon date; the other, an enamelled example from Hockwold (HER 5587, NMS-365796), is certainly Roman and adds to the large number of zoomorphic brooches from this temple site.¹²¹ Stags were associated with Diana, a goddess whose worship is not particularly attested in Roman Britain but could also have been locally connected with other gods, not least Faunus, given his woodland domain. Like the leopards, these brooches were probably manufactured on the Continent.

Another enamelled plate brooch from Hockwold (HER 5351, Fig. 7, no. 52), this time in the form of a boar, may pertain to the worship of Hercules, the defeat of the Erymanthian boar being one of the demigod's labours. Depiction of boars had a long tradition in Iron Age Norfolk, however, with the animal being used on Icenian coins

¹⁰⁹ Rogerson and Ashley 2010, p. 128, fig. 16 and Worrell 2010, p. 428

¹¹⁰ Gurney 1995a

¹¹¹ Gurney 1995b, p. 224

¹¹² Green 1978, p. 24

¹¹³ Gurney 2006, p. 117, fig. 3E

¹¹⁴ Johns 1996, pp. 173-7

¹¹⁵ See Crummy 2007, Ferris 2012, p. 35, and Marsden 2012a, pp. 60-1

¹¹⁶ Marsden 2012a, p. 60

¹¹⁷ Mackreth 2011, p. 185. It should also be noted that many modern fakes of this type exist, including some rather unconvincing examples in silver. The English provenances ascribed to them should not allow their acceptance

¹¹⁸ Another, offered for sale on the website Timeline Originals, is also described as having been found in Norfolk

¹¹⁹ Gurney 2001, p. 700

¹²⁰ Gurney 2001, p. 699

¹²¹ See Rogerson and Ashley 2012, p. 411, fig. 22, for an example of Anglo-Saxon date from Sedgeford (HER 1600)

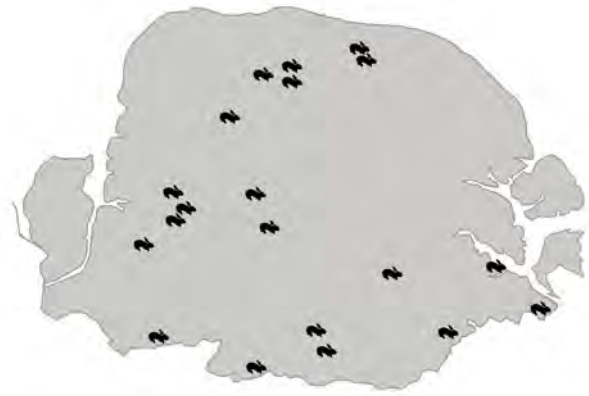
and also represented in the form of several figurines.¹²² It appears to have been a totemic animal in the Icenian realms and, given this, could have been connected with Faunus himself in this area. Nonetheless, like many of the other zoomorphic brooches, it is possibly continental in origin and so we should probably be wary of ascribing a local significance to its presence in Norfolk.

Brooches representing hounds comprise a well-known group. As Johns and Mackreth both note, when incomplete they can sometimes be difficult to differentiate from hares but examples that are certainly hounds have been found at Beeston-with-Bittering (HER 4084, NMS-D15192), Howe (HER 15195), and Kirstead (HER 51672, described as a hare, NMS-E94040). Given that almost all examples that may be either hounds or hares have been closely studied by the author this is a small number although hare brooches do seem to have been far more popular than those depicting hounds in the rest of Britain.

Hare (or rabbit) brooches are encountered more frequently in Norfolk. The type most usually encountered in Britain is of a flat form with enamelled cells as represented by examples from Aldeby (HER 41979, NMS-D860D3), Binham (HER 24150), Bracon Ash (HER 28732), Brettenham (no HER number recorded), East Walton (HER 30884)¹²³, Fincham (HER 25093), Great Walsingham (HER 2024, NMS-6BCFE5), Hindringham (HER 29133), Hockwold (HER 5587), Kenninghall (HER 37284), Narborough (HER 3907), Quidenham (HER 30517, NMS-1DCFC6) and two from Weybourne (HER 29168, NMS-A329A3).¹²⁴ Flat mounts of broadly similar form have surfaced at Shipdham (HER 35800)¹²⁵ and Tattersett (HER 31569) whilst a rectangular plate brooch with a hare described in enamel was found at Denton (HER 35976).

These examples with enamelled cells are most likely British but tinned examples of what is probably a rabbit rather than a hare, of a more three-dimensional form, with two small rabbits picked out in enamel on the chest are probably Continental; examples of this type have been noted from Beeston-with-Bittering (HER 4085, NMS-011075), Langley with Hardley (HER 24003), and Narford (HER 3974). The group as a whole has a widespread distribution (Map 4). As mentioned above, the hare was sacred to Venus and these items may have had some religious significance. It is easy to see these items not only as colourful dress accessories but as small votives. They may have provided alternatives to the pipeclay Venus figurines discussed above or, given the collapse of that industry in the late second or early third century, they may have replaced them.

An interesting type of brooch depicts a bird best described as some sort of raptor grasping a hare or perhaps a rabbit.¹²⁶



MAP 4 DISTRIBUTION OF HARE BROOCHES

An example excavated from Hockwold (HER 5587, NWCHM 1961.199.57) has been supplemented by others from Burgh and Tuttington (HER 28657),¹²⁷ Hillington (HER 20467) and Witton (HER 7023, NMS-116425). The device probably alludes to the all-conquering power of death and, as Crummy has suggested for the sandal brooches, these may have had similar significance.¹²⁸

As with cockerel figurines, cockerel or hen brooches have been found in some numbers and their distribution is spread across Britain.¹²⁹ These are fully three-dimensional and are best described as representing a broody hen which would have been viewed from above when worn. They are probably a British product since they do not appear to be found in any numbers on the Continent. Indeed, Britain appears to have been a centre for the production of enamelled metalwork in the Roman period, undoubtedly the continuation of an Iron Age tradition.¹³⁰

Like the figurines, the cockerel brooches are undoubtedly connected with Mercury. With their enamelled plumage they may have served simply as colourful brooches but a votive connection cannot be discounted. Two distinct types occur, one with two pairs of tip-to-tip crescents decorating the bird's back and triangular cells forming a border, the other with the wing feathers defined by enamelled cells.¹³¹ In Norfolk examples have been found at Ashwellthorpe (HER 30205), Beeston-with-Bittering (HER 42699, NMS-912690), Brettenham (no HER number recorded), Caistor St Edmund (HER 12575), Cranwich (HER 25479), Fornsett (HER 31418), Hockwold (HER 52672, NMS-40D170, Fig. 7, no. 53), Marsham (HER 33240),¹³² Shouldham Thorpe (HER 37136, NMS1678), Thetford (no HER number recorded), Warham (HER 55366) and Weybourne (HER 29806).¹³³ A flat, one-dimensional example was recovered at Warham (HER 1826).

¹²² Davies 2011, pp. 59-62

¹²³ Gurney 1995b, p. 225

¹²⁴ Johns 1996, pp. 174-5

¹²⁵ Gurney 2003, p. 362

¹²⁶ Mackreth 2011, p. 184

¹²⁷ Gurney 1994, p. 110

¹²⁸ Crummy 2007

¹²⁹ Mackreth 2011, p. 184

¹³⁰ Kunzl 2012, pp. 9-11

¹³¹ The two types are illustrated in Mackreth 2011, plate 126, nos. 14798 and 8012

¹³² Gurney 2002, p. 155

¹³³ Gurney 1994, p. 110

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Zoomorphic brooches in the form of ducks swimming on the surface of the water are common and the distribution of the two major types appears to be weighted towards the eastern side of England.¹³⁴ Like the cockerels or hens discussed above, they are usually enamelled and these appear to have been a British product. One type has bands of enamel running along the duck's body, the other crescentiform decoration delineating plumage. Examples are known from Besthorpe (HER 29171), East Walton (HER 34888, NMS-007A94), Feltwell (HER 21137), Fincham (HER 41327), Great Walsingham (HER 21106), Keswick (HER 9714), Newton Flotman (HER 32289),¹³⁵ Salthouse (HER 6294), Scole (HER 37706) and Great Walsingham (HER 2024). An odd example which also appears to be swimming but with its wings outspread was found at Lynford (HER 40854)¹³⁶ whilst another, of rather unusual appearance but still with enamelled plumage came to light at Marham (HER 29262, NMS-E1A9D6).

Their significance is difficult to grasp, since ducks are not obviously sacred to any particular deity. Duck head finials occur on other items from Roman Norfolk, notably on the Crownthorpe cups dated to the earliest years of Roman rule in Britain¹³⁷, and, of course, on many of the spoons from the Thetford Treasure. As water birds they would have been very familiar to the denizens of the low-lying counties of Eastern Britain. As we have seen above, Green argued that ducks may be linked to a water cult with associations to the sun and healing.¹³⁸ Here the solar association speculated for the ravens mentioned above may be significant. Did this sun and water cult recognise ravens as the agents of the sun god Apollo and also ducks as birds native to water? Another possibility is that the interpretation of their flight may have placed ducks in the category of suitable subjects for augury. Faunus' oracular powers may provide a link here.

In terms of find spots, their distribution is widespread, if weighted slightly towards the south of the county (Map 5). The hen brooches also occur across Norfolk (Map 6).



MAP 5 DISTRIBUTION OF DUCK BROOCHES

As mentioned above, both ducks and hens are known in some numbers from outside Norfolk in any case; within the county the distribution map could well reflect where metal detecting is taking place rather than anything else.

Other brooches depicting birds in flight, perhaps doves, occur from Ashwellthorpe (HER 30205), Heacham (HER 37217, NMS-98DFC5), Hillington (HER 30512), Mattishall (HER 36629, NMS-119B46) and Wicklewood (HER 8897). Unlike the other bird brooches these are generally not enamelled. They are probably of Continental origin but British manufacture for at least some is also possible.

Other zoomorphic bird brooches are rarer, probably a testament to a Continental origin or the relative lack of adherents to the deities which they represented or both. An owl brooch, rare in Britain, was found at Caistor St Edmund (HER 9791).¹³⁹ The owl was sacred to Minerva and it would seem likely that this brooch was either worn by an adherent of the goddess or given to her as a gift. Although Minerva was a popular goddess in Roman Britain, her owl is seldom encountered. Interestingly, this brooch is identical to the example illustrated in Hattatt's corpus, also allegedly found in Norfolk.¹⁴⁰

A flat brooch from Fincham (HER 33343) was probably intended to represent a peacock with its enamelled tail feathers displayed. The peacock was sacred to Juno and the goddess' apparent lack of popularity in Britain is probably a reason why this is so far the only example to have been recovered from Norfolk. It is probably of Continental origin.

Another example from Brettenham (HER 41001), again a flat plate brooch, is inlaid with cells of blue enamel and was probably intended to portray an eagle. A fragment of what may have been a broadly similar specimen but decorated with red and blue enamel was found at Narford (HER 3974, NMS-56BD25). They are without any other parallels from Norfolk and again, appear to be of Continental origin as seems to be the case with most (if not all) of these one-dimensional bird brooches.

The so-called horse and rider brooches form an important sub-category of the zoomorphic group and have recently been the subject of a study by Ruth Fillery-Travis.¹⁴¹ A large number were recovered from the Hockwold-cum-Wilton site (HER 5587), eight during excavations in 1961¹⁴² and a further two during subsequent metal-detecting (NMS-4B4422 and NMS-36EA72). Two examples of the type have also been found at Beeston-with-Bittering (HER 4084, NMS-9B1C76 and NMS-B9CE17, Fig. 2, no. 54) whilst single specimens have come from Brampton (HER 1124), Brampton (HER 35860, NMS-E66C22), Brettenham (no HER number

¹³⁴ McReth 2011, pp. 183-4

¹³⁵ Gurney 1998, p. 326

¹³⁶ Gurney 2005, p. 742

¹³⁷ Davies 2011, pp. 64-5

¹³⁸ Green 1978, p. 24

¹³⁹ Gurney 2003, p. 360

¹⁴⁰ Hattatt 1987, 1154

¹⁴¹ Fillery-Travis 2012. Also see Mackreth 2011, pp. 181-2 and pp. 241-2

¹⁴² Mackreth in Gurney 1986, pp. 65-7

recorded), Burgh Castle (HER 24659), Caistor St Edmund (HER 9787), Cawston (HER 33889, NMS-B78DC6), Fritton (HER 24463), Great Walsingham (HER 28254)¹⁴³, Harling (HER 51752), Langley-with-Hardley (HER 21289), Long Stratton (HER 12513), Mattishall (HER 25729), Quidenham (HER 31405)¹⁴⁴, Stoke Ferry (HER 53725), Stoke Ferry (HER 40006, NMS-C071E3), West Rudham (HER 37209, NMS1024), Wicklewood (HER 18111, NMS-303AE2) and Wighton (HER 1113, NMS-EE0274)).

The significance of these brooches has been debated at some length. It is surely the case, given the large numbers found at temple sites that they were primarily intended as votives. As brooches they may also have served to represent marks of affiliation to the rider god as well as being used as offerings. Guy de la Bedoyere's idea that they might have represented in themselves a pilgrimage or journey is interesting but not very convincing.¹⁴⁵ Johns argues that they may have functioned as souvenirs of a visit to a shrine in the same way as did Medieval pilgrim badges.¹⁴⁶ Their concentration at religious sites must have some bearing on interpreting their function, however, and an interpretation centring on their deposition at these locations as votives is surely the most compelling.

Horse and rider statuettes represent a well known and distinctive group of figurines, being confined in general to an area spreading up from Cambridgeshire into Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and South Lincolnshire. Recent finds have reinforced this distribution and, as far as is known, none have thus far been discovered in Norfolk. The only possible exception is a strange figurine from Warham (HER 55366, NMS-32FEA3, Fig. 7, no. 55) which is, however, so unlike the other statuettes both in size and execution that it is doubtful whether it depicts the same deity. Miranda Green commented on the fact that the horseman cult was centred on the territory of the Catuvellauni and the southern Corieltauvi.¹⁴⁷

Given the close iconographic relationship between the brooches and statuettes, we may presume that the same deity was the subject of both types of object. The brooches have a far wider distribution but this is most likely due to the fact that they, being smaller, more portable and also functional as dress accessories, travelled far beyond the heartland of the horse and rider cult. The identity of this god has been debated at some length. Green identified the figure as a Celtic form of Mars, a suggestion which Fillery-Travis is wary of accepting although she puts forward no alternatives.¹⁴⁸ Ferris argues that the type represents a celebration of what he terms 'hyper-masculinity' and links

it with phallic imagery.¹⁴⁹ The author finds this argument less than compelling.

It is probably best not to try to force too exact an identification on the deity. Celtic gods are often equated with Roman ones but the two figures are rarely exact counterparts. In Roman Britain the equation of one god with another was probably rather loose. His many adherents would have understood who the Rider God was; for us, it is sufficient to conclude that he was a popular deity who must have stood high in the pantheon of the Catuvellauni and Southern Corieltauvi. It is probably best simply to refer to him as the Catuvellaunian Rider God.

The large number of horse and rider brooches from the Roman temple site at Hockwold is illuminating and must point to the existence of a shrine to the god there. Given Hockwold's location, where Icenian territory met that of the Catuvellauni, this would come as no surprise. However, although some brooches travelled into the territory of the Iceni, the lack of any statuettes depicting the Catuvellaunian Rider God implies that the worship of this deity did not gain much favour in Norfolk. Find spots of the brooches are widespread across the county (Map 7).

At least 90 horse and rider brooches, an enormous number, have been recovered from a site near Bosworth in Leicestershire; again, like Hockwold, this must have been a religious centre with a large shrine to the Rider God. Given the vast numbers involved, it would not be unreasonable to speculate that this was probably the major centre of the Rider God cult in Britain.

Brooches in the form of other members of the animal kingdom are reasonably well known but were probably mainly Continental in their manufacture and certainly are not really represented in the Norfolk record at all. A fragmentary frog brooch from Oxborough (HER 33549) is the only one of this type of which the author is currently aware.



MAP 6 DISTRIBUTION OF COCKEREL BROOCHES

¹⁴³ Gurney 1994, p. 110

¹⁴⁴ Gurney 2001, p. 699

¹⁴⁵ De la Bedoyere 2002, p. 130

¹⁴⁶ Johns 1996, p. 174

¹⁴⁷ Green 1977, pp. 305-6

¹⁴⁸ Fillery-Travis 2012, pp. 8-9

¹⁴⁹ Ferris 2012, p. 39

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As regards the realm of the oceans, a fine example of a dolphin from Quidenham (HER 58452, NMS-C780B3, Fig. 7, no. 56) is another rarity for Britain. Green points out that dolphins could represent the journey of the soul to the Blessed Isles and this may explain their significance.¹⁵⁰ A similar role has been posited for the class of brooches in the form of sandals.¹⁵¹ Fish brooches have been found at Binham (HER 24150), Little Cressingham (NWHCM 1950.179.6.2), Wacton (HER 30397) and Weybourne (HER 29097)¹⁵². Another example was uncovered during the excavations at Brancaster.¹⁵³ Rectangular plate brooches depicting a fish have been found at Scole (HER 35320)¹⁵⁴ and Spixworth (HER 20914). If these fish brooches had a religious meaning then it is somewhat uncertain but they may have been connected to Neptune.

One category that may have been British is that of the so-called fly brooches. To what extent these are zoomorphic is debateable but some certainly do appear to have been intended to represent the insect. Examples are not numerous but two are known from Seething (HER 40302) and single specimens from Caistor St Edmund (NWHCM 1939.77.1), Narford (HER 3974), and Weeting-with-Broomhill (HER 19722). Wasp-like examples have been found at Hindringham (HER 28470)¹⁵⁵ and Tatterset (HER 31569)¹⁵⁶ and one that is best described as being in the form of a cicada at Pulham St Mary (HER 54885, NMS-0066D6, Fig. 7, no. 57). The significance of the group as a whole (if there was any) is difficult to understand but Crummy may be right in her suggestion that they reference Mercury.¹⁵⁷



MAP 7 DISTRIBUTION OF HORSE AND RIDER BROOCHES

Other material

Bracelets, and particularly rings, in the form of confronted snake heads were a common item of jewellery in the Roman period. A large number of silver examples, at least 42, were present in the Snettisham jeweller's hoard.¹⁵⁸ Two bracelets and three rings were recovered from the temple site at Great Walsingham (HER 2024).¹⁵⁹ The snake, on account of the fact that it sheds its skin, was regarded as self-renewing and serpents are associated with Salus, the personification of health. These rings (and bracelets) must have been a common sight judging by the number that have appeared over the years. Examples of rings (or fragments thereof) are known from Brettenham (HER 5653), Caistor St Edmund (NWHCM 1976.303.2), East Walton (HER 29273), Fincham (HER 25162), Foxley (HER 50278), Fransham (HER 20508), Hockwold (NWHCM 1962.396.494), Merton (HER 30988)¹⁶⁰, Narford (HER 3974), Quidenham (HER 13700), Scole (HER 21485, two examples, one complete and a fragment), Snettisham (HER 28450)¹⁶¹, Wreningham (HER 28868) and Yelverton (HER 33109)¹⁶², and bracelets (or fragments) from Bracon Ash (HER 29900)¹⁶³, Brettenham (HER 5653), Burnham Market (HER 18496)¹⁶⁴, Hockwold (HER 5587) and Weeting-with-Broomhill (NWHCM 1959.26) but there are probably many more in the records.

Having surveyed and discussed the objects depicting deities in the round (or at least partially in the round) some consideration of other items depicting gods and goddesses is desirable. The most significant category is that of finger rings, both those with engraved bezels and those set with intaglio gems, as well as the large number of unset signet stones from the so-called Snettisham Roman jeweller's hoard that relate to the divinities which have featured above.¹⁶⁵ The Snettisham assemblage contained a large number (127) of rather crudely-engraved cornelians.

It is not surprising, given the religious artefacts we have already seen, that there is a preponderance of rings and ringstones depicting Mercury. A silver ring from the Roman temple site at Great Walsingham¹⁶⁶ is inscribed with the letters MER whilst two other rings from the same site are set with repousse oval plaques depicting the deity.¹⁶⁷ A ring inscribed MERC was found at North Creake (HER 1913), another with the dedication DEO MER at Saham Toney (HER 4697) and a third with DEM at Narford (HER 51245, NMS-DE40B2). Five of the cornelian intaglios from the Snettisham Roman jeweller's hoard, including one set into

¹⁵⁰ Green 1977, p. 302

¹⁵¹ Crummy 2007, pp. 226-7 and Marsden 2012, 61-2

¹⁵² Gurney 1995b, p. 225

¹⁵³ Mackreth in Hinchliffe and Sparey Green 1985, p. 203

¹⁵⁴ Gurney 2001, p. 699

¹⁵⁵ Gurney 1992, p. 367

¹⁵⁶ Gurney 2003, p. 362

¹⁵⁷ Crummy 2007, pp. 227-8

¹⁵⁸ Johns 1997, pp. 34-40

¹⁵⁹ Bagnall Smith 1999, pp. 38-9, nos. 38-42

¹⁶⁰ Gurney 2002, p. 155

¹⁶¹ Gurney 2003, p. 362

¹⁶² Gurney 2005, p. 742

¹⁶³ Gurney 1997, p. 542

¹⁶⁴ Gurney 1997, p. 542

¹⁶⁵ See Henig 2007 for a corpus of gems from Romano-British sites and Johns 1996, pp. 79-83 for a useful introduction to the iconography on Roman-British intaglios. Also Marsden 2009 for a corpus of Norfolk finds from 2002-8

¹⁶⁶ Bagnall Smith 1999, p. 32, no. 18

¹⁶⁷ Bagnall Smith 1999, pp. 35-6, nos. 29-30

a silver ring, are engraved with figures of Mercury and demonstrate the god's popularity as a device for signets.¹⁶⁸ Other intaglios from the county also show Mercury, for example a glass example imitating the gemstone nicolo from Grimston (HER 3579).¹⁶⁹

Mars was represented on two of the Snettisham cornelians, one mounted in a silver ring¹⁷⁰ and one unmounted.¹⁷¹ One of the two rings from Walsingham described as depicting him in fact shows an armed figure of Minerva.¹⁷² As suggested by the relative lack of figurines of Mars from Norfolk discussed above, he does not seem to have been an overly popular god in the Icenian dominions.

Satyrs occur on five of the intaglios from the Snettisham hoard¹⁷³. Perhaps what is most interesting is that three of these had been mounted into silver rings, implying that they were ready for collection or they were a popular subject for signet stones which would not be long in stock¹⁷⁴. Only seventeen of the Snettisham cornelians had been mounted; the satyr gems form a relatively high percentage of this total. Other gems, a cornelian from Weybourne (HER 29423, Fig. 7, no. 58) and a nicolo glass from Wacton (HER 42714) also feature satyrs.¹⁷⁵

A few rings attest what might be termed more esoteric beliefs. A silver ring from Pulham Market (HER 52999, NMS-E3D804), with a depiction in relief of an eagle drinking from a cup proffered by a small figure, references the myth of Jupiter and Ganymede. This has a religious dimension, the themes of metamorphosis and apotheosis being well-known and obvious to anyone with cultural leanings. A similar legend, the seduction of Leda by Jupiter in the form of a swan, is illustrated on an intaglio of nicolo glass set in a silver ring bezel from Pentney (HER 15170, NWHCM 2007.269)¹⁷⁶ and on one of the Walsingham rings (HER 2024, Fig. 7, no. 59).¹⁷⁷

Two moulded glass intaglios set into third-century gilded oval plate brooches may also feature a tale of metamorphosis, the transformation of either Daphne into a laurel tree whilst attempting to escape Apollo or that of the nymph Ambrosia, turned into a vine that she might attack King Lycurgus. One of these was recovered from Narford (HER 3974)¹⁷⁸, the other from Warham (no HER number recorded). A number of similar examples are known from Britain, including a fine example from Bronington in Wales (NMGW-6A45F5).¹⁷⁹ Interesting as these may be, however, they go beyond the scope of this paper and the

light they may cast on religious or quasi-religious beliefs in late Roman Britain will be more fully considered elsewhere.

Conclusions: The Gods of Roman Norfolk

The gods worshipped in the areas neighbouring Roman Norfolk have already been discussed briefly. It is clear from the concentration of TOT rings in Lincolnshire that Toutatis was the principal god of the Corieltavi. The god we have styled the Rider God dominates the lands of the Catuvellauni with what must have been a significant shrine at Hockwold, a site lying near the border between the lands of that tribe and those of the Iceni.

Looking at the pre-Roman period, analysis by Daphne Nash Briggs of the legends on the inscribed series of Icenian coins and some of the subject matter on the coinage as a whole, suggests that the Iceni's origins lay across the Channel.¹⁸⁰ This might well have implications for the nature of the deities that were worshipped in the area during the Roman period but for the moment it is perhaps better to consider the evidence in hand from the Roman period itself.

Within Norfolk, we have interesting groupings. It must surely be significant that examples of the raven figurines discussed above have only so far been recovered from an area of north-east Norfolk. This suggests a closely defined area in which a particular god held sway. Most likely this was a local cult with its origins quite probably going back to the Iron Age. The god Apollo, or a local version of the god, seems to have been the subject of this worship.

The Faunus mounts are rather scattered and the relatively small number does not make any argument on their distribution very compelling. Nonetheless, none are known from the northern coastal area just as none of the raven figurines are known from the central or southern part of the county. It is interesting that these two groups of material seem to have different distributions and might point to different areas following different deities.

Here Western Norfolk is illuminating. We know that the area was rich in the Roman period, with villas spreading south along the Peddars Way, and much metal detecting has been carried out there but there seems to be a complete lack of anything that can be connected to the worship of Faunus or Bacchus. It may well be that people on the Fen edge and the surrounding area held beliefs which were very different from those of the men and women dwelling in North East Norfolk and those in South Norfolk.

To the west, into the central Fenland, it has been speculated that a large imperial estate occupied much of this area and was centred on Stonea in Cambridgeshire.¹⁸¹ Interestingly, a number of sceptre terminals in the form of what appear to

¹⁶⁸ Johns 1997, p. 90, nos. 174-7 and 95, no. 223 for the mounted example

¹⁶⁹ Marsden 2009, pp. 530-1

¹⁷⁰ Johns 1997, p. 98, no. 234

¹⁷¹ Johns 1997, p. 91, no. 185

¹⁷² Bagnall Smith 1999, p. 37, no. 35

¹⁷³ Johns 1997, p. 91, nos. 181-2

¹⁷⁴ Johns 1997, p. 96, nos. 226-7 and p. 98, no. 233

¹⁷⁵ For the Wacton paste see Marsden 2009, p. 535, and 2012, p. 63

¹⁷⁶ Marsden 2009, pp. 532-4

¹⁷⁷ Bagnall Smith 1999, p. 36, no. 32

¹⁷⁸ Marsden 2009, pp. 531-2

¹⁷⁹ Hattatt 1987, p. 258, fig. 80

¹⁸⁰ Nash-Briggs 2011

¹⁸¹ Potter 1981, Jackson and Potter 1996 and Davies 2008, p. 194

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be imperial busts, including a recently discovered example depicting a late first or early second-century empress¹⁸², may suggest that worship of the imperial cult was strong on this estate. These objects are almost unknown outside this area of Eastern England; nor do they seem to occur in the rest of the Roman Empire.

Snettisham, an enormously important centre in the late Iron Age appears to have become an insignificant backwater in the Roman period. Certainly, the small number of Roman coins from the site compared to the rich deposits of coins and torcs from the time before the conquest suggests that there was a deliberate attempt to deregulate Snettisham as a religious centre. Here the importance of Great Walsingham in the Roman period is probably significant, this centre being promoted at the expense of Snettisham.¹⁸³ The setting up of a large Imperial estate encompassing the lands to the south-west of Snettisham may have been a way of ensuring that old beliefs were submerged under the worship of the *Domus Divina*, the Imperial house.¹⁸⁴

What is interesting in the context of Roman Norfolk is the relative lack of images of Bacchus. Taken in conjunction with the large amount of material depicting Faunus, we should consider the possibility that, in Norfolk, Faunus stood in for Bacchus and it was he who led the procession of satyrs, panthers and maenads who constituted the entourage normally headed by the other god.

There has been practically nothing found in Norfolk to suggest a Christian presence in the Roman period unlike the neighbouring counties of Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. The dearth of explicitly Christian items is remarkable and strongly suggests that the area comprising Norfolk was, on the whole, rather unreceptive to the new religion.

Recently, one find has surfaced near Swaffham has surfaced to show that at least one inhabitant of Roman Norfolk had

embraced the faith (HER 30879, NMS-0B5BB1, Fig. 7, no. 60). This is a ring bezel engraved with a male bust and the encircling inscription (*Antonius, may you live in God*) is explicitly Christian. Another ring, in gold from Brancaster, also has a Christian association.¹⁸⁵ Both are very late in date, however, perhaps as late as the early fifth century, and suggest that, even as Roman authority was collapsing in Britain, most of Norfolk's inhabitants stuck stubbornly to the gods of their ancestors. Here, the countryside was still inhabited, at least in the minds of its people, by the cavorting Satyr and the prowling Leopard with Ravens hovering in the skies above.

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¹⁸² Henig and Marsden forthcoming. For the earlier examples, see Toynbee 1963, pp. 124-5, nos. 2-5

¹⁸³ Marsden 2011, pp. 49-50

¹⁸⁴ Henig and Marsden forthcoming

¹⁸⁵ Henig 2007, pp. 186-7, no. 790

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